

# Westfield Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123864
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314744
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Timothy Gilson

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	950
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cherrie Warwick-Mortimer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Stevenson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Stiby Road Yeovil BA21 3EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 423747
<b>Fax number</b>	01935 411340

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Westfield Community School is an average-sized school, which has specialist science college status. It serves the west and south of Yeovil. The school has a lower than average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vast majority of the students are from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school currently has an acting headteacher and a permanent appointment has been made for September 2008. The school is part of the Yeovil federation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Westfield Community School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. The school has been through a difficult and turbulent period over the past three years. There has been a trend of declining standards and achievement for several years. However, through the effective actions of the school's leadership, this decline has now been arrested. Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall. The drive and determination of the acting headteacher has led to significant improvements in the school's ethos over the past year. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and the direction it is taking. However, a significant minority express concerns about the impact of poor behaviour on pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are aware of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and their attitudes to learning and enjoyment of school are satisfactory. They get on well with each other at break times and the school site is well cared for and free of litter. Behaviour overall is satisfactory and the school is a calm and pleasant learning environment. Pupils welcome visitors with courtesy, and are articulate and open about their view of the school's strengths and weakness. Decisive action by the acting headteacher and key support staff mean that poor attendance, which had been a significant concern, has improved considerably this year. Attendance is now satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there is considerable variation between subjects. While there is some good teaching, too often it lacks pace and is over focused on tasks led by the teacher. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally positive. Behaviour is good when pupils are engaged in lessons. However, when tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities and there is insufficient challenge, behaviour can deteriorate.

The curriculum is matched to the needs of the school community and is satisfactory overall. There is an adequate range of extra-curricular activities. The school's specialist status as a science college has led to effective links with local primary schools and the provision of a broad range of science courses to Westfield pupils.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school is a safe environment in which the pupils report that there is very little bullying and that if it does occur it is dealt with effectively by staff. The school has introduced a comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress and intervening to support pupils who fall behind in some subject areas. This is now being developed across the whole school. Not all pupils are aware of their targets or what they need to improve in their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for in the special educational needs department and they make satisfactory progress in lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently established across the school. She enjoys the support of the whole school community. There is inconsistency in the quality of leadership throughout the school, although a new sense of purpose and optimism is now evident. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are now fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are actively involved in determining the strategic direction of the school. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Because of the decline in standards and attendance up until 2007, improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all learners are sufficiently challenged and engaged.
- Develop a more rigorous system of lesson monitoring to ensure that all staff feel accountable for raising standards and achievement throughout the school.

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

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' attainment when they join the school is broadly average. Standards have been declining over recent years. However, the school has taken appropriate action to halt the decline and standards by Year 11 are broadly average. In 2007, the GCSE results were below the national average and there was considerable variation between subjects. The results were lowest in English, mathematics and geography and highest in physical education. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2007, the results were broadly average. They were better in mathematics than in English.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In 2007, pupils made inadequate progress in mathematics, but improvements in teaching and learning in this subject mean that pupils now make satisfactory progress. Many pupils underachieved because of their very poor attendance during the year. More effective systems to monitor and support pupils have led to improved attendance. The school has taken appropriate action to tackle underachievement by specific groups of pupils to ensure that they are now making adequate progress. Boys make less progress than girls as is the case nationally and the school is taking appropriate measures to improve their achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The targets pupils are set are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure that they all make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils appreciate what the school has to offer and the opportunities it gives to contribute to the school community. The 'Student Voice', which replaced the school council, involves a considerable number of pupils and has been responsible for refurbishing areas of the school and for raising funds for charity. Together with the pupil mentoring programme and the prefect system, Student Voice is well regarded by pupils as a means of taking responsibility within the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. An audit of current provision shows that cultural education across the curriculum is not fully developed; this was identified as a key issue in the last inspection. Pupils feel secure in school and are aware of where to seek help and support. They have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of healthy eating and participating in sporting activities.

Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the world beyond school through their work-related learning and careers education. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and the level of exclusions is low following a thorough review of the school's discipline procedures. The commitment given

to improving levels of attendance together with the robust new structures now in place have had a positive impact in improving attendance and bringing absences in line with schools nationally.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, effective planning for activities challenge and engage all learners. In these classes, teachers demonstrate their enthusiasm for their subject and share this with pupils in a harmonious atmosphere, using information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning. For example, in one Year 8 mathematics class, pupils were fully on task and actively engaged in the construction of an interactive graph, using ICT to track the speed of a racing car. As a consequence, progress was good and enjoyment high.

Nevertheless, there remain too many instances where the teaching does not secure effective learning for all pupils. In too many lessons, teaching does not sufficiently engage and challenge higher attaining pupils in particular. Too often in these classes, teachers set the same work for all pupils, regardless of their different abilities. In some classes, learning is led too much by the teacher, thus requiring pupils to listen passively to some often over-lengthy explanations. Many lessons are characterised by weak use of questioning and a lack of opportunity for pupils to engage in meaningful discussion about their learning. As a result, some more reluctant learners go off task too easily and become both inactive and disengaged. Not all pupils are receiving regular and consistent advice on how well they are achieving and how to improve their work.

The work of the learning support assistants is effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number of those for whom English is an additional language. These pupils are making the same progress as their peers both in mainstream lessons and in their special classes.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. The new reading scheme has been successful in raising pupils' interest in, and enjoyment of, reading whilst increasing their literacy skills. Similar projects have been developed to improve numeracy through science and mathematics, although the impact of both these initiatives on standards and progress has yet to be evaluated.

The school has worked well in partnership with the local federation to explore and develop work-related study options, such as the young apprenticeship scheme, general maintenance, child development and health and social care. A range of vocational options and courses are designed to meet the needs and aspirations of learners. However, whilst the curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' personal development needs, it is less consistent in meeting the full range of pupils' academic needs.

Specialist college status has had a satisfactory impact. In mathematics and science, a number of new initiatives have been introduced and have been successful in raising the aspirations of individual groups of learners, in particular gifted and talented pupils. This work now needs to be extended to include all groups of learners at the school. Science days, the physics project and Aim Higher science and mathematics projects, in particular, are raising pupils' awareness

of, interest in, and understanding of, the impact and importance of science and mathematics in the 21st century. The school is successful in promoting a range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. This provision is supported by committed staff and uptake for these activities is good. Other opportunities available include trips, both at home and abroad, cultural and work-related visits and sports activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory with some good features. As well as internal provision, the school is involved with many outside agencies. Systems for monitoring the external support pupils receive are efficient and effective. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from a team committed to meeting their individual needs. The reading intervention programme is a strength of the special educational needs department. Teaching assistants are deployed throughout the school to support pupils' learning and make a valuable contribution in monitoring the progress of vulnerable pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are supported through mentoring and 'Theme Day' programmes. The school recognises the need to develop additional learning activities for gifted and talented pupils in lessons. Appropriate arrangements for child protection and promoting health and safety are in place. Risk assessments are robust, with appropriate lines of responsibility for curriculum areas and school visits. When instances of conflict or bullying arise, they are dealt with well by the school. A clear and thorough data system for academic monitoring is in place. Its use across the school as a classroom tool to promote learning is inconsistent and not fully utilised by teachers. As a result, pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve in some, but not all, subjects. The school promotes many links with parents including the 'Engaging Parents' project, a recent national initiative which provides additional home support. However, many parents feel that the school could do more to improve communication with them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has coped with recent serious staffing issues. This has led to increasing workloads for the senior leadership team which has taken on additional responsibilities with enthusiasm. The strong leadership of the acting headteacher has recognised and encouraged their individual skills and ensured they work cohesively.

This is a school focused on improvement and striving towards a clear vision based on its motto 'Success for All'. Senior leaders are now aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have prioritised clearly the key areas for development. The impact of these changes can be seen in the provision of a more positive learning environment where success is celebrated. However, sustained development of all key areas is required to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. The school's procedures for monitoring progress and evaluating its own effectiveness are in place, including departmental reviews. The procedures are sound but they are not yet applied with sufficient rigour to reach consistently secure judgements. The revised school development plan gives a firm foundation for implementing change and there is satisfactory capacity to improve the school further. The role of middle managers is now more clearly defined and understood. They appreciate being valued and encouraged and as a result, most are playing an important part in driving forward school improvement.

The value now placed on all members of staff has created a growing ethos of teamwork and collaboration and the school has an increasing sense of working as a community. Good practice is shared but the school recognises that a planned approach to sharing expertise and innovation would benefit more staff. Leaders have ensured that staff have access to good quality data. However, there is a lack of a whole-school approach to clarify how this can be used effectively to inform lesson planning, set targets and track achievement. Management of specialist science status has given the school a distinctive role both within the local federation of schools and across the region. Its impact within the school is less obvious.

The governing body now provides appropriate support and challenge for the school. Having made effective use of local authority support, governors are better informed and able to use their expertise effectively to scrutinise school plans and developments before they are put in place. They play a significant part in the life of the school, becoming involved and supporting a range of activities.



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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	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield Community School, Yeovil, BA21 3EP

Thank you very much for making us so welcome on our recent inspection of your school. We were very struck by your cheerful and open manner and the courtesy that you showed to visitors. This letter is to tell you what we found out about the school.

Westfield Community School is a satisfactory school that is improving, following a difficult period. It is clear that the headteacher and the staff know what the strengths and weaknesses are and are committed to raising standards at the school. Since last summer, it is clear that the school has worked effectively to improve attendance and attitudes. You make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are broadly in line with national averages. Teaching and learning are satisfactory as are the care, guidance and support you receive. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum.

We have asked the school to focus on two areas to help it improve.

- Ensure that all teachers challenge you and involve you more effectively in lessons.
- Monitor lessons more carefully to ensure that all staff are contributing to raising standards and achievement throughout the school.

You can help by continuing to improve your attendance and making sure that you work hard in all your lessons. We hope that Westfield Community School continues to improve and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gilson Lead inspector



9 June 2008

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Yours sincerely

Tim Gilson  
Lead inspector