

Westfield Primary Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133374
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	316104
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	649
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Etherington
Headteacher	Mr Mark Barnett
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Askham Lane Acomb York North Yorkshire YO24 3HP
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Westfield Primary Community is a large school on the edge of the city of York. It serves an area with below average economic circumstances with some pockets of significant disadvantage. There is low mobility. A few pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, and a small number arrive at an early stage of learning English as a second language. The school includes a resource base for 21 pupils with social, educational and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of pupils with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. With partners, the school offers a neighbourhood Nursery and a range of extended services including after-school and holiday clubs. It is to become an integrated children's centre. It holds the Investors in People Award, national Healthy Schools Award, Gold Artsmark, British Council International Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active School Award and City of York Inclusion Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Westfield Primary School has long been valued by its parents and pupils because of its strongly supportive approach. What have been missing are sound academic standards. Recently, much has been done by the staff team to make sure that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well, and this has lifted standards to a satisfactory level. The school now meets the needs of learners effectively and inclusively and provides satisfactory value for money.

The principles of Every Child Matters are woven into the fabric of this full service extended school. Pupils are happy and develop well because the school puts their well-being first. This shows in good relationships with adults and in the way pupils work and play together. Care, support and guidance are good, and effective partnerships with other agencies contribute well to inclusion.

Pupils make clear that they now enjoy coming to school because of what they learn. This is reflected in their recently improved standards. Though these are still below the national average, they are higher than in the recent past. Pupils are currently making satisfactory progress and the drive to meet really challenging targets is strong. The curriculum and teaching are sound. Teaching is increasingly skilful in involving pupils and helping them to understand how to do better, but more consistency is needed. Teaching does not always fit the needs of all pupils in the class and teachers' pointers for improvement are not always followed up well enough. Better use could be made of opportunities to develop basic skills within different subjects.

The school's leaders and managers have been instrumental in ensuring recent improvement. They have consolidated the good quality of care and support, and improved academic guidance; they have sustained the good quality of pupils' personal development and well-being and improved attendance to a satisfactory level. Most significantly, they have called a halt to underperformance. Standards are low, but achievement is now satisfactory, as demonstrated by rigorous monitoring which is very alert to variations. For example, the school is clear that progress in mathematics is only just adequate and needs to accelerate to compensate for what was not learned well in the past. It has identified that progress is slower in Key Stage 1 than elsewhere.

Governors and senior staff have recently shown they can bring about improvement by tackling weak aspects of provision. They have successfully restructured and made new appointments, set a clear direction and brought the staff on board. The new leadership team has a good mix of skills. It knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, despite slight differences between the self-evaluation and inspection grades. Though there has been improvement, the recommendations of the previous inspection are to a great extent still needed and are reflected in the current school development plan. The school as it is moving now shows a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good, and pupils make good progress. When children join the Nursery, their skills are far below what would be expected for their age. Many have difficulties with language and mathematical skills. The school recognises this and puts in place a range of activities which are carefully planned to enable pupils to make progress in acquiring these skills. There is a strong focus on encouraging pupils to be able to speak and

listen effectively, and the development of pupils' basic skills is made a priority. Pupils are encouraged to become independent and consequently develop in self-confidence. Good systems are in place for measuring the progress of all pupils, and this information is used to plan activities that best meet the needs of each individual. Provision for outdoor play is well planned and of a good quality. By the time pupils leave the Foundation Stage they have made good progress in all areas, but are still lagging behind what is expected in language and mathematical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics and in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure teaching meets the needs of all pupils and marking leads to improvement.
- Ensure basic skills are progressively developed by coherent curriculum planning.

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

Standards have improved and are now below average rather than far below average as they have been for the past five years. In view of their starting points, the achievement of those who were in Year 6 in 2007 was satisfactory. This represents a marked improvement on the four previous years, when achievement was poor. There are no significant differences between boys and girls, or between any other groups.

Children arrive in the Foundation Stage with skills generally well below those expected for their age. They get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. By the time they start Key Stage 1, pupils' skills are generally below those expected for their age. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but insufficient to raise standards to the expected level. Standards in Key Stage 1 improved last year. Having been well below the national average since 2004, they are now below the national average. Pupils' standard of reading is back to the level it was at in 2003, but it has not recovered that far yet in writing or mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils have reached Level 4 in mathematics and Level 5 in English. The school's careful analysis of progress data has accurately highlighted what underlies these variations, for example a need to improve writing and mental calculation strategies in mathematics.

On the full range of inspection evidence, including the school's systematic monitoring of pupils' recent work, standards are below average, and given the lower starting points and historically slower progress of the current Year 6, likely to remain so. Current progress is securely satisfactory, because of improvements in the quality of provision and extra support given to targeted groups of pupils. In some aspects, such as English, and for those with higher prior attainment, there is evidence of good progress, but it is not yet fast enough to make up for the legacy of weak standards in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the expected levels of progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop well because of the expectations and opportunities they encounter. They enjoy coming to school to learn, collaborate well and feel their views are valued. The school has

successfully involved more parents in learning by listening carefully to their preferences, too. As one parent put it, the staff do 'a class job in helping children learn and . the parents learn something too!' Pupils feel fully part of the school and positive about moving on to the next phase of education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.

Pupils, including more vulnerable ones, participate enthusiastically in varied and inclusive opportunities to develop wider interests and to take on challenges. They willingly accept responsibilities within the school and in the local community. They trust adults to help them resolve problems, and say that occasional bullying is handled well. Their behaviour is considerate and exclusions are rare. They take good note of advice on how to stay safe and healthy, appreciating how, for example, the school's rules - and customs like circle time and gardening in the vegetable patch - contribute to both.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Clear statements about what pupils are expected to achieve in each lesson are shared with the pupils, both at the beginning of the lesson and at the end, and pupils understand what teachers expect of them. The teachers use their generally good subject knowledge to make lessons enjoyable. Pupils are encouraged to participate in their own learning, discuss their work with partners, and have opportunities to assess their own work. Recently introduced tracking systems enable teachers to identify underachievement. Targets for writing enable pupils to know what they need to do next to improve their work, but as yet targets for mathematics are not in place throughout the school. The 'three stars and a wish' system is used by all pupils to help them look at their work critically, and this helps them to improve their standard of work, although the persistence with which individual targets are followed up varies. Teaching support staff provide effective additional support for those pupils who need help to take a full part in lessons. In the best lessons a brisk pace keeps all pupils engaged, there is a high level of challenge for more able pupils, and work set matches the needs and abilities of all pupils. Some teachers use questioning skills well to challenge pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. In some classrooms interactive whiteboards are used well to support learning. However, these good features are not consistent in all lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum planning undertaken by phase groups is currently seeking more opportunities to link subjects to make learning more meaningful for pupils, but this is still in the early stages of development. Currently cross-curricular links are not consistent throughout the school and, as a result, there is a lack of coherence to the curricular structure. For example, opportunities to use and build on literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum are sometimes missed.

More emphasis on drama, role-play and speaking and listening, as a result of national guidance, has recently enlivened the curriculum and involved pupils more directly in their learning. Pupils make regular educational visits within the local community. For example the youngest children recently took part in the local University Dance Festival, and older children prepared food from different cultures for York Food Festival. The local schools Sports Partnership has provided opportunities for sporting links with other schools and arranged training on playground games for lunchtime supervisors. Visitors to the school, including African drummers, puppeteers,

artists, potters and members of the local church, have further enriched the curriculum, as have themed events such as International Week and Book Week. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils. Provision for playing a musical instrument including recorders, keyboards, guitars and steel band is a strength of the school, and popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's motto 'Where children come first' is a reality. The staff team, volunteers and key partners are committed to ensuring that all pupils are well cared for, and recently they have strengthened guidance for learning.

Safeguarding, health and safety, and risk assessments are robust and well managed by the school. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory because of the robust procedures the school has put in place. The provision for vulnerable pupils including children in care is good, reflecting the inclusive nature of the school; as a consequence they make good progress. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is increasing and the school is beginning to adjust provision to better meet their needs, although more needs to be done. Pupil tracking is very thorough and results in adjustments to class teaching and focused interventions which have had a positive impact on achievement. Most pupils are aware of the curricular targets, involved to a degree in self-assessment and welcome the pointers for improvement, but these are not always followed through by the pupils. Older pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils, are prepared well for transition to secondary school and a number are already becoming excited by the prospect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although standards remain below the national average and are likely to do so in the near future, real improvements have been made over the last two years. There is now a shared sense of direction at the school. Extensive monitoring and evaluation, at first strongly supported by the local authority, is steadily improving the quality of teaching. The school is now setting challenging targets including for attendance and is increasingly confident that these targets will be met as a result of the improvements. Target-setting and tracking of pupils' progress are rigorous. Performance targets are set for all teachers and these include ones directly linked to the school priorities in raising standards and ensuring good progress by all groups of pupils.

The capacity of the senior team has been greatly enhanced by its restructuring and key appointments to the school. Data are analysed well and used to pinpoint weaknesses which are swiftly tackled. For example, analysis of progress in 2007 informed an immediate drive to improve writing and the proportion of pupils who reach Level 4 in mathematics. Middle managers are contributing well to this drive and everybody is aware of priorities and expectations. Professional development includes all staff and has been very precisely focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

This is an inclusive school which keeps abreast of emerging needs within the community. For example, it has recognised and is acting on the need to provide for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The school makes effective use of its resources, accommodation and staff, and has a coherent vision for its role in the community. Good governance is a key factor in the school's improvement. Governors have been proactive in tackling areas of

underperformance by providing appropriate challenge and a strategic approach to building capacity.

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

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	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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?	3
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	3
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	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, a team of inspectors recently visited your school. We greatly enjoyed meeting you and would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful. We are grateful to all the parents who sent their views, too. I am now writing to let you know what we found.

Your school is satisfactory overall. One of its special strengths is the way you grow up as individuals who know how to stay healthy and safe, and who enjoy coming to school to learn. This is because the school gives you good care, support and guidance. You told us that if you have worries, you trust the adults in the school to help you deal with them. Your attendance has improved and is satisfactory. Your behaviour is good and you are ready to learn.

It is clear that your school is improving, after some years when standards of work have been poor. Teachers have made lessons more interesting and make sure that each one of you understands how to do your work well and gets extra help when needed. As a result you are now making adequate progress, though you have not yet reached the standards of work we expect. You need to develop better skills from an earlier age, for example, in using numbers. The headteacher and other staff are clear about what they have to do and have already made a difference.

To improve further, the school needs to raise the standard of your work, especially in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics. Lessons should meet all the different needs and interests in the class. You need to build your basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills while you are learning different subjects. Marking needs to lead to improvement - and this means you have to take action on the targets set by your teachers.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.