

Westfield Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133390
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	316109
Inspection dates	5–6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Howath
Headteacher	Mr Michael Kidd
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Nilsson Drive Workington Cumbria CA14 5BD
Telephone number	01900 325257
Fax number	01900 325258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school has a reducing roll, but few pupils move in and out during the school year. It serves an area with high levels of social and economic disadvantage and a third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is recognised as providing a full range of extended services. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Healthy School, Activemark, Artsmark, Cumbrian Inclusion Charter Mark, Taking a Stand and Financial Management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors' findings confirm the school's accurate evaluation that it is good and provides good value for money. This is a happy school. Parents and pupils are full of praise for the school and recognise the effective work it does for the children and the community. A typical view is: 'The staff at Westfield are friendly, helpful and approachable and ... I have no regrets or concerns.'

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is due to the first-rate pastoral care and promotion of personal skills and abilities. Pupils' excellent behaviour and their positive attitudes to school and work are the result of their exceptionally strong moral and social development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the vast majority attend regularly. The school's very strong emphasis on promoting healthy and safe lifestyles means that pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of these important matters. Pupils have a lot of pride in the outstanding contribution they make to the school and the broader community.

Achievement is good because of the strong teaching and learning and good curriculum. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage and they make good progress from the well below expected levels of skills and abilities with which they start. At the end of Reception, children reach standards that are typical for their age. Basic skills are developed well, particularly in reading and mathematics. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils have made good progress. The 2007 test results for Year 6 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Given the pupils' low starting points when they begin at school, this represents good achievement. Gains in writing, however, are not as good and standards are lower than in other areas. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the care of the local authority also make good progress because of the good support they receive. Given the pupils' good attitudes to school and good progress they are well placed to succeed in their future schooling and later life.

The strong elements of the teaching include good relationships and management of the classes. This means that pupils' learning is rarely disrupted and they are helpful and collaborative in their work. The use of assessment to drive learning forward has been a big improvement in recent years and has led to more effective marking. Across the school there have been developments in the quality and use of marking, but there are inconsistencies. This means that pupils are not always as clear as they ought to be about their achievements and what they need to do to improve further. The good curriculum is enjoyed by pupils who particularly appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit well from the good modifications to the curriculum. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects other than English and this is one of the reasons why writing is not as good as it could be.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides particularly strong leadership in the promotion of pupils' outstanding pastoral care. The monitoring of pupils' academic achievements is good and improving and this has been the springboard to higher standards and improved progress. Key staff provide strong support and the work of coordinators is improving. Fruitful links with outside agencies have fostered good improvements in pupils' academic achievements and their well-being. Governance is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage has a number of outstanding features such as the leadership and management of the skilled support staff, the curriculum and the learning environment. Links with parents are good. Attainment on entry to Nursery is well below what is typical for their age. Achievement and progress are good because the children are taught well. Progress is best in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy skills. Children enjoy school and work and play together well. All adults have a good understanding of the required areas of learning and of how young children learn. Teachers maintain detailed records of achievement for each child and tasks are well matched to individual needs. The staff work together effectively to increase children's ability to develop as independent learners. As a result, expectations, achievements and attainment levels continue to rise.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English.
- Make the quality of marking consistent across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below expected levels. They make good progress throughout the school. This is confirmed in the upward trend in national test results at the end of Years 2 and 6. This improved picture is the result of much better monitoring of pupils' achievements and the consequent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

By the end of Year 2, standards were above average in the 2007 national tests and this was a big improvement on the significantly below average results in previous years. However, there are fewer pupils than the norm reaching the higher Level 3 in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards in 2007 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science and clearly improving. National data shows that pupils make good progress and, in fact, the rate of progress in 2007 was in the top 20% of similar schools nationally. English outcomes are not as strong as other subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as shown, for example, through art, music, dance and drama is exceptionally strong. Pupils know and understand about the traditions and cultures of people from other countries. Pupils get on very well with one another and are sensitive to the needs of others. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a problem. The rare instances of inappropriate behaviour are, they say, always dealt with effectively. Pupils show positive attitudes to work and school and are emphatic that they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is close to the national average. Pupils know, understand and explain the benefits of leading healthy and safe

lifestyles. Older pupils act as good role models for younger children and enjoy serving the school community in many ways such as acting as playground buddies. They relish these opportunities to act responsibly and show that they are trustworthy. Pupils become mature and confident learners and are in a strong position to get the most out of their future life in school and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching and learning promote strong personal and academic progress. Typically, strong lesson management leads to keen work from pupils and few disruptions to learning. The teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding promote the strong development of pupils' basic learning skills. Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils and this means that the youngsters are confident in letting the adults know when they have a problem with their learning. Good and improving assessment leads to good levels of challenge for pupils. Across the school there have been improvements in the quality and use of marking, but there are inconsistencies. As a result, pupils are not always as clear as they should be about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All statutory requirements are met and the newly developed curriculum promotes academic development well. In particular, teachers are guided well to provide learning opportunities that are matched ever more precisely to the individual needs of pupils. Planning is flexible and regular reviews ensure that activities meet the day-to-day needs of pupils. Pupils are helped to develop good basic skills in numeracy and reading. In some classes, too few opportunities are provided to use and develop writing skills in subjects other than English, such as history. Provision for those with a statement of special educational need and those with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well. An effective personal, social and health education programme provides interesting and challenging activities and resources that support learning in how to stay safe and healthy. Good extra-curricular activities enrich learning in dance, music, singing, art and sport. There is a rich tradition, which is highly valued by the pupils, of welcoming visitors to the school and making visits to places of educational interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The exemplary care of pupils, including the most vulnerable, is a major factor in the promotion of their excellent personal development and well-being. Teaching and support staff know pupils very well and are committed to meeting their varied needs. Safeguarding, child protection and health and safety arrangements meet requirements. Risk assessments are detailed, thorough and understood by all staff. The school has useful working links with other schools, the local authority and other agencies such as those supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Transition arrangements when pupils transfer to secondary school are managed well. Good systems for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress have been established but they are not yet used as precisely as they might be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and has a clear vision for the school. He rightly judges that: there is a need for pupils to be happy and enjoy school; very strong partnerships are needed to support vulnerable pupils; helping parents to understand learning also helps their children; there is a need to focus on raising pupils' achievements. He is well supported by senior staff and the governing body and there is a tangible commitment to improving the school. The impact of this is seen in the good gains made in pupils' learning and progress. The realistic and detailed school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities, such as the use of assessment information to increase achievement and improve teaching. Consequently, the pace of improvement is good. The school has improved since its last inspection and is well placed to make further gains. Financial management is prudent and surplus monies are earmarked to cushion the school against the uncertainties of falling rolls. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is highly supportive and developing a wider range of monitoring techniques. Nevertheless, it is over-reliant on the school's management for its evaluation of the school'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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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?	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	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

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	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

9 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield Nursery and Primary School, Cumbria, CA14 5BD

It has been a great pleasure and privilege to spend two days in your happy school. Thank you very much for the warm welcome, courtesy and help you provided. The inspection team judge the school to be good and this letter sets out some of our main findings.

What I really liked about your school:

- the improvements in English, mathematics and science standards over the last few years
- the good start and progress you make in Nursery and Reception
- the way that your very strong moral and social development lead to excellent behaviour, good attitudes to school and the strong relationships you develop
- the wide range of activities that enrich your excellent personal development, such as visits, visitors and the clubs you attend
- the way that you all contribute to a very safe and caring atmosphere in the school
- the way that the school is bringing in better ways to keep an eye on your achievements.

To make sure that the school gets even better, the staff will need to help you to improve your writing. A major part of this will be giving you more opportunities to write in other subjects, such as history. They will also need to make sure that all marking gives you a clear idea of how well you are doing and what else you need to do to improve further. You can be very helpful by continuing to work hard and by always doing your best work.

Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector