

Westways Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107095
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324525
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	454
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Kay
Headteacher	Mrs Melany Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mona Avenue Sheffield South Yorkshire S10 1NE
Telephone number	0114 2662471
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportions of those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language are well above average. These pupils come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. More pupils than is usual leave or join during the school year. Children enter the Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn and spring terms. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, Artsmark Silver and the International Schools Award.

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 and improving school where pupils from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds enjoy their education because teachers strive to make learning exciting and care well for all pupils. As parents say, 'It is a welcoming, encouraging school with a fantastic mix of pupils. Children are treated as individuals and supported well to attain their individual goals.' The leadership team shares a clear vision of school improvement and there is a relentless drive to improve the learning experiences of the pupils. This has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. This has helped to overcome some past underachievement in Key Stage 1. The curriculum is also more exciting. While these improvements are still relatively recent and so have not, as yet, had a major impact on standards, there is evidence that most pupils are now making good progress in their lessons. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's work and recognise the improvements that have been made. They particularly appreciate the way the school is forging links between home and school.

The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. In most lessons, teachers engage pupils in a range of interesting independent and group work activities. In these lessons teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn and use skilful questions to check that they have understood. The curriculum is good. It is increasingly based on pupils' interests and the development of skills which foster learning. Pupils are encouraged to write in subjects other than English and this is resulting in some very exciting writing. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities and visits to promote learning, especially in the creative arts, and makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. In some lessons, there is a less consistent approach to planning, to questioning and to marking. As a result, in these lessons progress is less pronounced.

In 2007, pupils attained average standards by the end of Year 6. This represented satisfactory progress, considering their average starting points, although pupils had made good progress in Key Stage 2 after some underachievement in Key Stage 1. The unvalidated 2008 results for Year 6 pupils indicate that although overall standards were average, the most able pupils achieved well above average results at the higher levels. Pupils are now making better progress across the school in most lessons, as a consequence of improved teaching.

Good care and support from a caring staff promote pupils' well-being. The school is particularly good at integrating pupils from diverse backgrounds. Academic guidance is good overall and all pupils have clear targets. While most marking is good and helps pupils to know how to improve their work, this is not consistent. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good because they have great regard for one another and a real desire to do their best. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. They readily take on responsibilities, such as being school council members or playground helpers. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school strongly promotes these qualities. Pupils develop increasingly effective life skills as they move through the school because of the varied and good quality experiences they receive.

Leadership and management are good. The school evaluates its work well and identifies the right priorities to bring about improvement. There is a firm understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Well-focused and appropriate initiatives have had an impact on improving pupils' academic progress. However, the school does not clearly monitor the impact

of these initiatives on standards or ensure that they are consistently applied across the school. There is strong teamwork and the headteacher encourages all teachers and the team of teaching assistants to develop their leadership roles. The highly effective action already taken and the much more even progress across the school as a result, show that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery class with skills which are broadly in line with national expectations overall, although a significant number are in the early stages of learning English and require additional language support. The effective leadership of the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has ensured that provision has improved. Children now make good progress as a result of effective teaching, strong care and support, and a good curriculum so that pupils at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage have skills which are above those expected for their age. Parents say, 'The activities and projects are varied and interesting and designed to broaden and deepen the children's understanding of the world around them. Our son is developing in all sorts of ways, is settled and happy and keen to learn. He runs to school each day.' There are good procedures for introducing children to school and they settle quickly into both Nursery and Reception classes. These are supported by good systems of care which are conducted in close partnership with many external agencies. Rigorous assessment procedures are used effectively to identify and address specific needs at an early stage and to build on what children can do. Staff successfully encourage children to learn through exploring a wide variety of exciting practical activities. Activities to develop numeracy and early reading skills are key features and fully engage children. While outdoor facilities are currently underdeveloped, they are well used to support interesting learning activities and encourage independent and creative learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation so that the school can clearly measure the use and impact of initiatives on standards for all groups of learners.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning, questioning and marking so as to ensure teaching is equally effective in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall achievement is good. Pupils in recent years have built soundly on the positive start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Key Stage 1. Most reach standards that are broadly average, although fewer pupils attain the highest levels. However, as a result of strategies that the school has put into place, progress is improving and consequently the current Year 1 pupils have skills that are above those expected for their age. The large number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 and national test results over the past two years confirm their good progress. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 has increased and in 2008 was well above average. However, the legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 1 affected the performance of a proportion of the less able pupils who did not fully catch up on what they had missed at an earlier stage. Up until this year, standards therefore have been close to average. Current performance shows that pupils are making good progress, confirming

their good achievement. This is the result of improvements to teaching and learning and strategies in the curriculum designed to improve writing and foster independent learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress as a result of effective intervention to meet their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are of good quality because of the high value the school places upon them. Pupils greatly enjoy their time at school and they behave well both in and out of lessons. Pupils from a wide range of ethnicities and cultures are polite, helpful and supportive of one another so that they feel safe and well cared for. They are encouraged to think deeply about social and moral issues and are extremely well informed about, and tolerant of, cultural difference. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A range of external accreditation and awards shows the good quality of their adoption of healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the elected school council and as playground leaders. They are also strongly involved in the wider community with contributions to the Sheffield Children's Festival and developments in the environment. Their enterprise skills are well developed through this work. These and the many other skills they acquire mean that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and improving and increasingly enable pupils to achieve well. Relationships and behaviour are good so that pupils enjoy lessons, especially when they can share ideas and explore collaboratively. In the best lessons they know clearly what they are to learn and teachers' good questioning tests and increases their understanding. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, ensuring that a suitable challenge is sustained in line with teachers' high expectations. Teachers generally plan lessons carefully so that there is a range of interesting activities. However, some inconsistencies in planning mean that work and teachers' questions are not always well matched to the needs of individual pupils and progress is less rapid. Expert support and guidance is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language and it enables them to make as equally good progress as their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, fulfils statutory requirements and provides a wide range of opportunities to explore the creative arts, especially music, both within lessons and through enrichment activities. Recent initiatives to develop pupils' skills in phonics and writing are having an impact on improving pupils' progress in writing, although this has not yet impacted on standards. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to see the links between subjects with a particular focus on exploring the cultural backgrounds of the wide range of minority ethnic groups found in the school. This engages pupils' interest and contributes to the school's outstanding commitment

to community cohesion. Inter-cultural activities play a particularly effective part in enhancing pupils' understanding of diversity. These include welcoming a wide range of visitors from different cultures into school to share experiences, taking part in International Weeks and linking with other schools internationally. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy learning Spanish and have made very good progress so that many are able to read and write complex sentences. While there are satisfactory opportunities to use information and communication technology as a tool to support and extend other areas of learning, there is room for assessment procedures to be further developed. A strong programme of personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' good personal development. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, including an orchestra and a variety of sporting activities, are attended enthusiastically by many pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff put pupils' well-being at the centre of their work, so that the care and support offered to pupils who have a wide range of individual needs are good. There are close relationships with outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for those who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language and for those who are new to both the school and the country is particularly strong. This means that their needs are identified and addressed quickly and effectively and that the impact of interventions is measured. Pupils' safety is paramount and safeguarding measures meet current government requirements. Academic guidance is good. Teachers know pupils well and pupils' progress is increasingly carefully tracked to help to ensure that they make successful steps in their learning. However, this has yet to have an impact on standards. Pupils have learning targets but do not all know clearly enough at which level they are working and what they have to do to reach the next level. The best marking tells pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work, but this good practice is not evident in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The respected and thoughtful headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has identified priorities for improvement which are clearly delineated in the school development plan and which have already had an impact on improving pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation is therefore good. The headteacher's delegation of responsibilities has made leaders more accountable and there is developing expertise in the analysis of data and ensuring that the curriculum is matched to pupils' individual needs. However, while there is evidence of improved provision, especially in Key Stage 1 and in writing and the curriculum, initiatives are not closely enough monitored to ensure that they are raising standards for all groups of learners at all levels or that they are consistently applied across the school. Community cohesion is outstanding. The school has a particularly good understanding of the community it serves. It draws pupils from a particularly wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It works extremely hard and to excellent effect to ensure that differences are valued and celebrated through the curriculum and other activities it provides. As a consequence, the school operates as an extremely harmonious and tolerant community. The school works hard to break down any cultural and linguistic barriers. This is very well

demonstrated by the way in which bi-lingual teaching assistants have been utilised to target hard to reach groups. This has significantly increased the numbers of families who take part in school events and who are able to support their children, for example, with homework. Governance is good. The governing body is well positioned to place a greater challenge to raise standards alongside the support it already offers to the school.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school. Westways Primary School is a good and improving school. One of the reasons for this is that the school is well led and managed by the head teacher, deputy head and governing body. All the staff care for you extremely well. They help all of you, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage to enjoy your learning and make good progress because they make your lessons fun and arrange many exciting activities for you to do. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school on time and care for one another in the playground. We think that you behave well and you look after one another. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you enjoy your lessons and like your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you, such as the clubs and musical activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way in which your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school better.

- Check that the new things they are doing to help you to improve your work are really helping all of you to reach higher standards.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning, questioning and marking so as to ensure teaching is equally effective in all lessons.

You can help by continuing to attend regularly and always doing your best.