

Westhouses Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112508
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325620
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	71
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	Mr Alan Cooke
Headteacher	Mr John Grogan
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bolden Terrace Westhouses Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 5AF
Telephone number	01773 832518
Fax number	

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most and serves pupils from a broadly average mix of socio-economic backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The provision includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in the Reception class. When children start in Reception there is a wide range of attainment but overall, attainment on entry is slightly below that expected for pupils of this age. The school has been awarded 'Healthy School Status' in recognition of its work in this area.

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 which cares for its pupils well. Parents praise the support given to their children and speak highly of the 'family atmosphere' throughout the school. 'The children always seem so happy and the staff really care for them', said one parent. This typifies many of the comments received during the inspection. Pupils work and play together well. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Relationships between the adults and pupils are warm and caring, and help pupils feel safe and secure. When at play or work, pupils support each other very well, sharing, taking turns and helping when they can. Pupils are confident and are developing a good level of independence. They say that they enjoy coming to school and this is shown in their high attendance rates.

Purposeful and dedicated leadership, committed staff and good teaching enable pupils to achieve well. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In those lessons where pupils make most progress, teachers carefully plan the small steps for learning, communicate them successfully to the pupils and engage the pupils in stimulating activities which focus sharply on the planned outcomes. However, in some lessons, activities do not motivate pupils to learn and are not focused on their needs.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' are courteous, polite, kind, tolerant and forgiving, and show respect for each other and the adults in school. Their contributions to the school and local communities are good. They willingly and sensibly take on responsibilities such as acting as playground buddies or helping in the classrooms. Pupils are proud of their part in raising money for charities, both locally and abroad. They have a mature understanding of the need to stay healthy and safe and put this knowledge into practice in their daily lives. This good level of personal development, together with good achievement in literacy and numeracy, is helping pupils become well prepared for their future.

The curriculum is good and supported well through a range of visits, visitors and after-school activities. Suitable emphasis is placed on improving pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, and developing their personal, social and emotional well-being. However, although the school has developed a broad curriculum plan, the progression of skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school is not detailed enough. Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well and work effectively with external agencies to support all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. The careful tracking of pupils' progress enables teachers to identify those who are finding learning difficult. The school responds rapidly to this and provides these pupils with focused and targeted support, often through skilled teaching assistants. Pupils' targets for improvement have been introduced, but few are relevant enough to have an impact on learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows what to do to improve. Systems for school self-evaluation and improvement are in place and effective. However, the areas for improvement are not always planned systematically enough and the monitoring of the effectiveness of improvements on pupils' progress lacks rigour. Consequently, although the correct areas for improvement are identified, the effect on pupils' achievement is not as great as it could be. Governors monitor the school effectively. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents say that their children settle happily and quickly into Reception and enjoy the activities. Because of the caring and supportive environment provided by the school, children quickly gain in confidence and take part in many stimulating activities, often led by the highly skilled teaching assistant. They make good progress, and, by the time they start in Year 1, most have the skills expected for children of that age and a few exceed them. Teachers' planning adequately covers all areas of learning with a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The school has plans to improve upon the outdoor environment, which is currently not sufficiently stimulating to extend children's understanding in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially at Key Stage 1, by ensuring that pupils' targets are relevant and challenging.
- Ensure that teachers plan the small steps needed to enable effective learning to take place, communicate them successfully to the pupils and engage them in stimulating activities which focus sharply on the planned outcomes.
- Ensure that all aspects of school self-evaluation and areas for improvement are planned and monitored systematically and with rigour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above the national average by the end of Year 6 and most pupils, including those who find learning difficult, achieve well, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. In the 2007 end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils' attained exceptionally well in English, with all the pupils reaching the higher level 5 and nearly all reaching this level in science. However, only one third of pupils reached this level in mathematics. During the past year, the school has successfully implemented plans to improve upon the attainment of the more able pupils in mathematics. School data show that in mathematics the more able pupils are making good progress and reaching above average standards. After a period of decline in recent years, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are beginning to rise. The 2007 Key Stage 1 test results and school data shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average and rising steadily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly, happy and polite. They settle to their work quickly and quietly, and show a high level of care, respect and consideration for others. In the playground, pupils play very well together and join in with each other's games easily and freely. This thoughtful attitude extends to people in the global community. Pupils talk enthusiastically about making and selling sandwiches at the harvest celebrations to raise money for the charity 'Water Aid' and selling cakes to help fund the local hospital. Pupils know how to stay safe and have an excellent understanding of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to experience a diversity of faiths and religions, which limits their understanding of cultures in the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. This helps ensure that lessons are orderly and the climate for learning is positive. In all classes the atmosphere is calm, friendly and productive. Pupils respond to this and work hard. Pupils say that they like their teachers and enjoy the work they are given. Although lessons are planned in detail, in many lessons the small steps which ensure effective learning are not clear and some of the activities, especially when commercial worksheets are used, fail to motivate or challenge the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a satisfactory overview of activities covered, but in some subjects the progression of skills and knowledge is not detailed enough. Consequently, there is lack of continuity from class to class. A strong personal, social and health education programme, supported very well by a variety of external agencies, contributes very well to pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle. Many opportunities through 'circle time' and general class discussions are provided for pupils to explore and discuss a variety of issues including racism, bullying and world events. There are very strong links with the local secondary school, especially through many sporting events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults and pupils work together in harmony. If a problem occurs, pupils know that they can discuss matters with the teachers and feel confident that they will get help and support. Safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are securely in place. Regular checks on pupils' progress help early identification of those who are experiencing difficulties. Very effective use of external agencies and a good range of carefully targeted support strategies contribute very well to pupils' achievement.

Although the school has implemented a system for improving achievement through pupils' targets, they are not integrated into day-to-day learning and are not sufficiently matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Consequently, they have limited impact on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's passionate commitment to improving the life-chances of all the pupils is clearly shown in his enthusiasm, commitment and dedication. Governors and parents say that he is highly respected in the community. Curriculum leaders provide valuable support and contribute effectively to raising staff awareness of areas for improvement. Recent improvements in pupils' test results show that the school has a good capacity to improve. Although the school knows the areas for development, the systems for improvement are not systematically deployed and sometimes lack sufficient rigour. The outcomes of some lesson observations are not recorded and subsequent areas for improvement are not monitored carefully enough. Consequently, the

rate of improvement is not as fast as it could be. Following the last inspection, the governors have improved upon their skills of monitoring the work of the school. Although they are aware that they could improve their skills even more, they now have a good overview of the school and keep a watchful eye on progress. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory, but the curriculum is not planned effectively enough to promote pupils' understanding of different ethnic and religious communities in the world.

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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	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	3
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?	3
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

25 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Westhouses Primary School, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 5AF

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such a pleasant experience. I enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books and talking to you. I was pleased to find that you enjoy coming to school and are happy. I particularly liked the way you care for each other and was very impressed with how well you play together. Well done! The teachers are also kind and helpful, and want you all to do your best. You go to a good school. Most of you are making good progress but some of you could be doing even better. I have asked the teachers to challenge you a little more by ensuring that you understand clearly the next small steps in your learning and by giving you work that you find interesting and helps you learn well. Some of you already know your targets, but the teachers must make sure that they are more carefully matched to your abilities and what you need to learn.

I have asked the headteacher and other teachers to check carefully that all the improvements they make to the school are having a good effect on your learning so that you make even better progress. You can help all the teachers by continuing to work hard.

I shall take away many good memories of your school and have very much enjoyed the time I have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector