

Westfield Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 114421 |
| Local Authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 326009 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Sheila Browning |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 207 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Bruce Miller |
| Headteacher | Keith Cheetham |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21–22 June 2006 |
| School address | Westfield Hastings East Sussex TN35 4QE |
| Telephone number | 01424 751404 |
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation for pupil attainment and achievement, management, planning, safeguarding of pupils, teaching and the curriculum. Inspectors also analysed 54 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively the school is promoting the achievement of more-able pupils, especially in writing in Year 2 and in mathematics in Year 6 and whether teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- The impact of the curriculum and the opportunities for investigative learning, including pupils' enjoyment, engagement and progress.
- The impact of work to develop the capacity of leadership and governance at all levels in securing future improvement.

Information about the school

Most pupils come from the Westfield area, although about one third of the pupils travel in to this smaller than average school from a much greater distance. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly in speech, language and communication, is above average but this proportion varies considerably across the year groups.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Westfield is a good school. Its outstanding attention to ensure care, guidance and support for pupils results in pupils who are confident, mature and thoughtful youngsters with exemplary attitudes and behaviour. Pupils obviously enjoy school. They say they feel very secure and a typical comment from parents recognises this: 'The welfare and happiness of the child is a priority, the children's needs always come first.'

The headteacher, with excellent support from the senior and other managers, has reinforced the focus on improvement. A more creative curriculum, with writing opportunities linked to real experiences, improvements in teaching and rigorous systems for checking the school's success have enabled improvements to take place. Supportive governors, led by an insightful chair of governors, act as effective critical friends. These factors, along with effective self-evaluation processes, ensure the school has good capacity to improve further. Pupils' achievement is good, but varies in some year groups. Inspection evidence confirms that the actions taken to remedy underperformance by more-able pupils in writing and mathematics are effective. Children start the school with broadly average levels and leave with standards above average which represents good progress overall. In English, attainment is high. Nonetheless, progress is inconsistent. Children get off to a good start in Reception, and build on this through Years 1 and 2 but progress slows in Years 3 and 4 accelerating again in Years 5 and 6. This variation is related to the differing levels of teachers' expectation of what pupils are capable of and the ways pupils are challenged in their learning. However, teaching is usually good and on occasion outstanding. During a Year 6 topic activity called, 'River Deep, Mountain High', pupils really responded with enthusiasm and researched facts on the internet, presented power points, critiqued them and wrote highly descriptive ships' logs.

Pupils demonstrate their impeccable behaviour by the way they co-operate with each other. They are keen to take responsibility as school councillors and playground buddies. Pupils enjoy gardening, sell their produce and have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, and many participate in sporting activities.

Pupils show an excellent understanding of their local and the global community but their understanding of the diversity in Britain today is relatively weaker.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make good progress evenly throughout the school by:
 - reviewing the transfer links between Years 2 and 3
 - checking that planning is used effectively to ensure tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for those in Years 3 and 4
 - checking that day-to-day planning, assessment and marking move pupils on to the next stage of their learning
 - providing teachers with opportunities to view good practice in other classes.

- Build on pupils' understanding of the diversity of people living in Britain today through:
 - developing more links with schools that have a different ethnic and cultural mix
 - inviting more adults from different backgrounds to promote the sharing of different views and beliefs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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| 2 |
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Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. The Westfield 'Big write' approach, and focused guided reading sessions have positively improved pupils' writing skills. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards in the Year 6 2008 national tests rose to above average. In English, results increased substantially and were high. This reflects the considerable work undertaken to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils' current work is of a similar standard. Pupils' completed topic books, ranging from 'Smugglers of Hastings' to 'Forces' demonstrate how effectively pupils use their literacy, research and presentational skills. In mathematics, a good emphasis on developing pupils' independent learning and practical problem solving activities helps develop pupils' good mathematical skills. The inspection focus on evaluating the achievement of more-able pupils indicated that they generally make good progress. Well-targeted programmes and support ensure those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. Excellent links with outside professionals and specific learning programmes support pupils well and they are well prepared for secondary school. Nonetheless, progress is inconsistent. Pupils do not make as much progress in Years 3 and 4 as in other year groups, this has been a trend since the last inspection. Pupils are closely tracked, understand their targets and talk confidently about what they need to do to improve their work. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from enrichment days and shared work with local schools. Whilst these opportunities are good, further enrichment is not firmly embedded.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding and make a strong contribution to their learning. Pupils show great consideration for others and enjoy participating in a range of activities from karate to first aid. They sell vegetables from the school garden providing a good community link. They know much about keeping healthy, make soup from Second World War recipes and choose healthy snacks. The school's silver healthy schools and activemark awards, and various workshops reflect the

school's commitment to healthy living. Pupils' especially enjoy participating in 'Activate', a whole-school initiative when children and adults take an exercise break. Pupils are proud to be school councillors, are self-confident and work well together, such as when deciding budgets for playground equipment. Pupils who are 'playground angels' are appreciated by those who seek their advice or help. Pupils demonstrate strong moral values and a good understanding of other cultures. They spoke enthusiastically about raising funds for 'Starfish Malawi', a charity, and donate surplus reading books to a Ugandan school. Reception children enjoyed tasting Chinese food. While activities such as these help develop pupils' very good awareness of global diversity, their understanding of the range of beliefs and cultures found in Britain today is relatively weaker.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are fun, with plenty of opportunities to learn through practical experiences. This motivates pupils in the majority of sessions. Teachers share learning objectives and good planning takes account of the key skills pupils need to develop. For instance, Year 2 pupils used internet search engines successfully to research facts for an information booklet on healthy eating and this helped reinforce their literacy skills. Teachers' good questioning, often aided with a sprinkling of humour, helps consolidate pupils' learning and enjoyment. Assessment information is used well to identify where interventions are needed to support or challenge pupils. However, this is not the case in all classes. Marking throughout the school is regular and refers to pupils' targets and how they could improve their work, and pupils are involved well in this process.

The broad, creative curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of groups and individuals. The emphasis on linking literacy to topic work and using first-hand

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

experiences whenever possible provides numerous writing opportunities and does not dilute learning in other subjects. The curriculum is effectively enriched, for example through drama, dance and Spanish. Pupils said 'in topics we do really fun stuff'; an example of this is their annual scarecrow-making event. Pupils take part in many activities through the extended school day and enjoy visits and visitors. Year 3 were excited about their trip to a Roman Villa.

The school goes the extra mile to support and sustain pupils' learning whatever challenging circumstances they may face. It takes excellent care of pupils. Specialist support and effective staff training help ensure pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported and their needs are very well met.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides excellent direction to the work of the school alongside senior leaders. This has resulted in good levels of parental satisfaction and teamwork. Successful partnerships with outside agencies and parents contribute significantly to pupils' learning and progress and parents said they value this. Senior leaders have also supported other schools needing improvement. Safeguarding requirements are robust and ensure that pupils are able to feel extremely safe. Self-evaluation is good and accurate. Senior managers have undertaken lesson observations, but this is not yet extended to subject co-ordinators. Staff and governors are involved in self-evaluation and take account of the views of parents and pupils both formally and informally. Governors support the school well, aided by a very active and enthusiastic chair of governors. New systems for overseeing the school's work look to be good, but these are not yet fully established. Community cohesion is promoted well in most respects. Very good provision is made to promote pupils' understanding of local and global issues, often aided by initiatives such as 'Starfish Malawi' and links with local schools and the village. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of lifestyles of people found in other parts of Britain is not as well developed. Equal opportunities are generally promoted well, although pupils in some year groups do not progress as well as others. Based upon its track record of improvement and good record of attainment the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |

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| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school ensures that children's start to school is as smooth as possible with a staggered start over a month. The attention given to children's emotional and welfare needs is outstanding. Children generally reach above average levels from starting points that are consistent with national expectations. Progress is good overall, and is especially good when linking sounds and letters though aspects of communication, language and literacy. Children's problem solving and reasoning skills develop a little more slowly. Children enjoy high levels of 'hands on' activities, such as using simple musical instruments, making an imaginary aeroplane and a dragon boat. Other activities include writing their names using Chinese letters, picking up small objects with chopsticks, making moving paper dragons, and extending number skills by trying to work out scores when bowling. Some opportunities are missed to extend activities with further writing or numeracy tasks and adults' interventions, although often frequent, do not always extend children's thinking as much as they could. Activities often help children to develop confidence and independence, while specific teaching of blending sounds and letters builds up confidence in reading and writing. Children enjoy a good balance of activities chosen by the teacher and those they select themselves. The provision is good and is well led and managed, largely because there is an experienced co-ordinator who is supporting provision in this age group.

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires from a total of 286 parents and carers registered at the school. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. Parents value the school's caring and supportive approach and say how much their children enjoy school. There were no particular trends in the few criticisms offered. A few parents felt their children were

not always sufficiently challenged. More-able pupils are now making better progress than before in writing especially because they are being set more challenging work but in mathematics this is not always the case. Inspectors also judged that pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not make as much progress as those in other year groups.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we asked them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

| | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 45 | 7 | 2 | 0 |

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |



5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield Primary School, Westfield, Hastings, TN35 4QE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school.

We enjoyed seeing how hard you work and agree with you and your parents that yours is a good school. We worked very closely with your headteacher and senior leaders and spent time talking with you, staff and governors and enjoyed looking at your work. These are the things your school does well.

- Staff really care for you, help you and look after you.
- You are hard-working, make good progress and you do especially well in English. Some of you write exceptionally well.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Your behaviour, attitudes and relationships are outstanding. You really do care for and look out for each other.
- You obviously enjoy your learning, especially topic work and all the other exciting things such as clubs, activities and visits that make learning fun.
- Teaching is good most of the time and sometimes outstanding.
- Those of you who have special responsibilities are rightly proud of what you have achieved. Well done!
- You have a particularly good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and enjoy eating healthily and taking part in sports.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working really hard to make your school even better than it is now.

The school rightly has plans to make it even better. This is what we have asked them to do.

- Make sure all of you make the progress that you should in every class.
- Help you to have an even greater understanding of the lifestyles of people from the wide range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds in Britain today.

You can help too by continuing to always work as hard as you can.

Yours faithfully

Sheila Browning
Lead inspector

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