

Westdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122534
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327752
Inspection date	27 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Yates
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Hayles
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2006
School address	Westdale Lane Mapperley Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG3 6ET
Telephone number	0115 9534707
Fax number	0115 9551009

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether the school had successfully improved the achievement of higher attaining pupils and raised standards in literacy across the curriculum; and the quality of governance, particularly their capacity to contribute to school improvement. Evidence was gathered through discussions with staff, pupils and governors, observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, and assessment information. Questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. Pupils usually enter with average attainment. Most of them are from White British backgrounds. A smaller than average percentage are eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average; it is much higher than average in some year groups, particularly the current Year 6. The school's work has been recognised through the Gold Healthy Schools Award and an International Schools Award. It is a member of the Wheldon and Gedling Extended Services group. It provides teaching placements to students at Nottingham Trent University. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher, and seven governors have resigned and been replaced.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Westdale Junior is a good school. Parents are positive about what it provides for their children. They find the staff approachable and they particularly appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. They feel welcome in the school and several wrote appreciatively of the positive changes made by the headteacher. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well cared for and thrive in its family atmosphere. Despite some significant changes since the last inspection, the quality of education has continued to improve, and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils achieve well. From what are generally average starting points, they make good progress and standards overall have been consistently high in recent years by Year 6. However, they have not been as high in English as they have been in mathematics and science, as in English a smaller proportion of pupils are successful in reaching the higher Level 5. Standards have been much higher in reading than in writing for the same reason. Through good, robust self-evaluation the school has pinpointed areas in need of development and taken suitable action to address these. For instance, staff have altered their planning so that almost all non-fiction writing occurs in subjects other than English, giving pupils a clear rationale for their writing tasks. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils in science were preparing to write a pamphlet of guidance about how to avoid getting food poisoning. In addition, pupils have opportunities to practise writing out of a subject context, so that they are prepared to tackle writing tests. These changes have been effective. It is clear from tracking information that pupils' progress in writing has accelerated and that standards in writing are rising, although there is some way to go before they are as high as those in reading. Currently, standards in the school are mostly above average, although they are average in Year 6 because this particular cohort had a lower starting point than is usual. Nonetheless, in common with most pupils in other years, they are making good progress and achieving well.

Pupils' good achievement is linked to good teaching and learning, a broad and well-enriched curriculum and good support and guidance. Year 3 pupils are well supported in making the move from the infants' school and so they settle quickly. Teachers use accurate assessment information to plan well for individual needs. This ensures that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level in lessons, including higher attaining pupils. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants provide good support for those who find learning difficult at times, and so these pupils make similarly good progress. For instance, they are given adapted learning materials or resources that help them to approach tasks. They are taught in small groups, giving them greater confidence in their abilities. Higher attaining pupils are given more difficult tasks, and extension work is provided. Staff manage pupils well, and pupils' good attitudes to learning contribute effectively to good progress in lessons. Sessions in class are calm and purposeful and pupils work quietly and concentrate well when tasks demand this. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well as a learning tool. Since the last inspection, resources for this have been increased and are now good. Staff have increased their skills and use ICT with confidence across the curriculum, and to good effect. Pupils enjoy using computers, for constructing graphs or logging data in science, for instance. In lessons, pupils are clear about what the objectives are, and as they get older they become increasingly skilled at evaluating their own work and that of others by using success criteria. They become less reliant on adult help, by using a dictionary to check spellings, for example. They are involved well in the learning process, because staff discuss with each one what their improvement targets should

be. Younger pupils refer to their planners to remind themselves what these are, but older ones know them well. Pupils' progress is carefully logged and tracked using ICT, and this means that staff quickly spot any who may be in need of additional support to help boost their progress. Pupils are confident that they can turn to adults for help and that it will be given.

Pupils' good personal development is the result of the positive ethos in the school, good relationships between adults and pupils, good guidance and a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills and qualities. Pupils and their parents agree that all at Westdale are expected to do their best. Achievements are widely celebrated and pupils show pleasure in the successes of others as well as personal recognition. They take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them and contribute well within school and the local community. Pupils willingly take responsibilities for tasks, acting as 'buddies' for new arrivals, representing their peers on the school council, and their school in sports tournaments or in the choir. Several develop well their musical talents and perform for others in assemblies as well as entertaining members of the local community. Pupils raise funds, run stalls at the fair and contribute to local exhibitions. Through the curriculum, pupils develop a good knowledge of the world beyond the United Kingdom, as well as a thorough understanding of differences between cultures. All pupils learn both Spanish and French in their time at the school. Because of the good guidance and role models in the school, pupils of all races and religions get on well together and racial incidents are rare. Behaviour is good and so is attendance. Pupils respect the simple school rules and respond well to guidance, about good manners at lunchtime, for instance. Bullying is not a feature of the school, and this contributes to pupils' feeling of security. Supervision is good and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves healthy and safe in school and in the community, and know well the sort of precautions they should take when using the internet. The majority make healthy choices at school, taking part in sports clubs as often as they can, eating a healthy snack and lunch, and drinking plenty of water. Because pupils develop their basic skills at a good rate, learn well how to get on with others and work in teams, and acquire enterprise skills, they are well prepared for secondary schooling.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a good start. Several parents commented favourably on the positive changes made since her arrival, in the accommodation, the playground and resources. Her presence in the playground each morning, welcoming pupils personally, is particularly appreciated. Although governors have a majority of new members, they are strongly committed to the school and discharge their duties well. New members have received suitable training, responsibilities have been allocated, and a large inherited budget surplus is being steadily reduced to a sensible contingency. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met, check first-hand on health and safety matters, and are about to implement plans to link with subject leaders so that they can play a fuller part in school evaluation. Most staff are experienced and have been in the school some time, providing stability in a period of change. All, including teaching assistants, have suitable responsibilities. Subject leaders are involved well in monitoring provision in their subjects, identifying areas for improvement and planning for development. They all collect information on standards in their subjects, although this is not always used to evaluate the effectiveness of developments. The school contributes well to community cohesion, giving pupils a clear sense of belonging, involving parents well and linking effectively with partner schools in the local community as well as other agencies and community groups. It welcomes visitors from other countries and provides placements for trainee teachers. Many parents are supportive and raise considerable funds for the school.

International links are being developed further to add to the good existing opportunities for pupils to acquire understanding of their roles as global citizens.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that they compare favourably with those in reading.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation by
- ensuring that subject leaders measure the impact of development on the standards that pupils achieve
- implementing plans for governors to play a greater part in school evaluation through a programme of focused visits linked to subjects.

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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

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	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?	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	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**

28 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westdale Junior School, Mapperley, NG3 6ET

Thank you for making me welcome in your school, especially to those who talked to me at lunchtime about school life. I enjoyed my day at Westdale.

I agree that yours is a good school. It was good to hear that you feel safe there and enjoy the lessons and other activities. The school certainly provides you with an interesting variety of things to learn. Because the teaching is good and you behave well and work hard, you are making good progress, especially in reading, science and mathematics. I was impressed with the way the older pupils know their personal targets.

You are taught well about the customs and cultures of other people and have good opportunities to take part in a range of different activities at lunchtime and after school. I thoroughly enjoyed the singing of the choir and the musicians accompanying them in assembly. The staff care for and give you good guidance so that you learn successfully how to get on well with others. I thought you all had good manners at lunchtime too. I found that you know well how to keep yourselves safe, and was delighted to hear that bullying is not a problem at Westdale. The jobs that you do in school are taken seriously and you consider others when you raise money for those less fortunate than you. You also make a valuable contribution to your local community. You are making healthy choices at school, and many of you take part in the sports clubs. When you leave Year 6 you are well prepared for secondary school because of the way you have progressed at Westdale.

I have asked the school to do two main things. Firstly, the work being done to improve your writing needs to continue until your writing is as good as your reading. Secondly, the teachers responsible for subjects and the governors need to play a greater part in measuring how successful the school is. You can help by continuing to attend regularly and keeping up the good work. I wish you well.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Aldridge

Lead inspector