

Weston Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134793
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	328985
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	59
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	10
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Howe
Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Evans
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Weston Road Totland Bay PO29 0HA
Telephone number	01983 752126
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well boys achieve in writing, and high-attainers, and gifted and talented pupils achieve overall; how effectively teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities; and how well managers at all levels contribute to improvement through self evaluation. The same inspector returned on day two to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from a range of documents, pupil progress data, school records, discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, Chair of Governors, staff and pupils, observations around the school and replies to the parents' questionnaire.

Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence 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 smaller than average community school admits children at the age of four and they leave for middle school at the age of nine. A quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly with moderate learning, communication and language difficulties. There are two pupils with a statement of special needs. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and increasing. Pupils come from a predominantly White British background. The current headteacher is in her second year at the school. In September, the school opened a breakfast and after-school club, managed by the governing body, as part of its EYFS provision. The school has been recognised nationally through the IT and Activemarks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for pupils. It has some outstanding aspects in the areas of pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support of pupils. Parents recognise the strengths of the school. They are highly appreciative of the excellent partnership arrangements that the school has established with them, and with other support agencies. These include a number of on-going family learning courses, for example in developing information technology skills, as well as meeting their childcare needs through the prompt establishment of the breakfast and after-school clubs. One parent wrote, 'My little boy loves school. He even asks to go to the breakfast club and doesn't want to go home'.

Academically, pupils achieve well from levels that are broadly as expected for pupils entering Year 1. This includes those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who benefit particularly from some very well targeted individual learning programmes, and pupils who are gifted and talented. The school recognises that to accelerate the progress of the gifted and talented, similar individual planning is required. Owing to the very small numbers in each year group, standards fluctuate significantly from year-to-year. This occurs because variations in the performance of each individual can disproportionately affect the overall picture. For example, the attainment of pupils who left the school in 2007 was above what is normally expected of Year 4, while this year attainment is broadly average. When year-on-year fluctuations are ironed out, standards are typically above average.

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and an outstanding awareness of how to keep safe. They thoroughly enjoy their physical activities such as 'wake up, shake up'. They talk about keeping safe around roads and also say, 'We don't run around school - it's dangerous'. They make an excellent contribution to the community, for example, through singing in the local nursing home, working as councillors, 'buddies', and when, during whole-school projects the older pupils help the younger ones. Above average standards, together with constant access to computers, help prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Consistently good teaching helps pupils achieve well. Excellent relationships in lessons helps ensure a pleasant learning environment in which pupils want to do well. Speaking and listening skills are well developed because teachers encourage discussion between 'talk-partners', and give pupils regular opportunities to report on their work. However, not all classroom assistants use open-ended questioning to further challenge pupils. Assessment information is used well to plan work for pupils of different abilities. Occasionally, opportunities are missed in teacher's marking to clearly show pupils how to improve their work.

The good curriculum includes various activities that add to pupils' enjoyment and their emotional well-being. Boys' writing skills are well developed through the introduction of new topics and resources, whilst high attainers are further challenged by good problem-solving opportunities during the 'maths merry go round' activity. The enhancement of the curriculum, particularly regarding sporting, art and music opportunities, is good. Pupils benefit well from activities such as the 'fruit circle' when they can discuss issues that concern them.

Pastoral care is outstanding. The school maximises the benefits of a small school. Strategies, such as one-to-one discussions with all pupils, ensure that the school knows the pupils extremely well, and gives them the opportunity to voice their views and concerns. The pupils tell of being well cared for and respected. This mutual respect, together with consistent opportunities for pupils to reflect, makes a very good contribution to the pupils' overall excellent spiritual, moral,

social and cultural education. The pupils also benefit from good academic support and guidance. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and is tracked well by the school. Regular meetings review individual performance. This leads to some well-organised intervention strategies, the impact of which is well monitored.

The school is improving under good, well-focused management and leadership. For example, school actions are resulting in improving attendance. The school is not complacent and a challenging target is set for further improvement. A skilled managerial approach uses monitoring and evaluation well to help bring about improvements, such as in the quality of teaching. The leadership of the headteacher has ensured that a clear vision for the school has been established, and, typically, involved a wide range of people in its development. A pupil version included their vision of, 'Learning in a school that excites you'. The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy ensures that this shared vision is based around improving pupils' standards and achievement and delivering a stimulating environment. Highly reflective performance management strategies link individual training needs well to school development plans. After training, the school identified the need for the development of more effective strategies to help promote community cohesion. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn through active links with national and international communities. Governors visit regularly. Governors are good at holding the school to account for its actions, but lack the training to enable them to extract all of the information contained in the school's assessment data. The capacity to improve the school is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The welfare of the children is promoted well. Health and safety and child protection policies and procedures are in place. Appropriate attention is paid to promoting hygiene. The children have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy, and show their great enjoyment when taking part in their 'Activate' sessions. They contribute very well to their community through acting as fruit and register monitors, but also when hosting their older friends during lunch break. Their personal development is good. Well managed and good transition procedures have ensured that the children settle quickly, despite problems this year associated with the late closure of the privately run nursery. Appropriately qualified staff present enjoyable activities for children attending the breakfast and after-school clubs. Current Reception children entered with levels of skills and knowledge below what is normally expected. They are making satisfactory progress. Children's progress slows when planning focuses more on the activity to be completed than what is to be learned. Assessment is currently insufficiently based on closely defined learning objectives. Good leadership and management has ensured that the children make good gains in their personal and emotional development, but the impact of its clear plans to improve academic development is yet to be seen.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's progress in the EYFS through ensuring that planning and assessment is focused on clear learning expectations.
- Develop community cohesion strategies that enable pupils to become actively involved in developing links with national and international communities.
- Ensure all marking gives a clear direction to pupils about how to improve their 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?	1
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
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?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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?	1

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	1
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?	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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Community School, Totland Bay, PO29 0HA

You may remember my recent visit to your school. Thank you for your welcome. I particularly enjoyed talking to you, and a special thank you to the school council and the 'men at lunch' for their contributions. Like you and your parents, I believe that yours is a good school.

Your school also does some things very well indeed. The way you develop as young people and the care, and support you receive are excellent. I especially liked the way you are encouraged to get involved in your school and local community. Well done, to those of you who sang for the people in the nursing home! You told me that you really enjoy school and like the various activities that you are given to do. I liked the way that you are asked to do things like Aboriginal art, and learn about life outside school through listening to adults about their work.

You progress well in your work, because you work hard but also as a result of good teaching. You told me that lessons are fun and that you like being challenged. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you are given a clear idea about what you need to do to improve your work. This will help you progress, and you can help your teachers by telling them when you find the work too easy or too hard.

Your school runs smoothly because it is well managed by your headteacher and her staff. They have done good work in improving the attendance rate. Well done! All of you know now that your education suffers if you do not come to school regularly. The adults want the very best for you and their plans for developing the Reception area look good. Even good schools can get better, and yours is going to look at two other things to help it improve. It is going to make contact with organisations off the island to help you understand about life elsewhere. For the youngest of you, the teachers are going to make changes to their lesson planning that will help you learn faster.

Thank you once again, and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector