

Westwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115040
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338496
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Greenwood
Headteacher	Simon Harbrow
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The majority of inspectors' time was spent in looking at pupils' learning. Inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed ten teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. They looked at samples of pupils' work, analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' and local authority monitoring, the school development plan, risk assessments, the minutes of governors' meetings and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 38 parents and carers.

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

- the extent to which current standards and rates of progress have accelerated from those of previous years
- how pupils' writing and problem-solving skills are developed across the curriculum
- the impact of measures taken by school leaders to secure improvements since the last inspection.

Information about the school

The school is a little larger than average. The great majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. When the school was last inspected, it was issued with a notice to improve because of shortcomings in the effectiveness of leadership and management. The headteacher was appointed in January 2010. For almost a year prior to that, the school had an interim headteacher. Westwood holds Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards. An independently managed nursery shares the school site, and this was separately inspected.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

There has been much change at Westwood Primary over the past year, and both parents and pupils confirm that it has been change for the better. Pupils are catching up on past underachievement and their attainment is now in line with what should be expected for their ages. Governors, the new leadership team and other staff all have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and of where further improvements are needed. They have drawn well on local authority support and have kept their eyes sharply focused on raising the quality of teaching and, through that, raising standards. Together they have developed, for example, an action plan that sets precise, measurable targets based on well-chosen priorities. Leaders have tackled the weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4 that were identified in the last inspection. There are examples in the school of much good and some outstanding teaching, but some inconsistencies remain to be tackled. Teachers know their pupils well and often match work carefully to the pupils' different capabilities. In some lessons, however, all are given the same or similar work, so that it is too easy for some and too difficult for others.

In some cases, pupils are enthused by the topics they are studying. Year 5 pupils, for example, had learnt a lot about Spartan childhood as part of their study of Ancient Greeks because the learning had been brought to life for them through role-play. Pupils also applied the note-taking skills they had previously learnt in literacy. Work on topics is not always as stimulating, however, especially in those classes where many of the activities are organised around dull worksheets. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing and problem-solving skills across the curriculum. Curriculum planning has not been adapted to take full account of the fact that, in most year groups, some of the pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. This means that, as parents report, work and topics can sometimes be repeated.

Pupils are now aware of their targets. Most marking gives pupils practical guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, but this is not a consistent feature of marking throughout the school. In the great majority of lessons, teachers manage their classes well, successfully motivating their pupils to try hard and do their best, but there are occasionally lessons in the infant classes where pupils are not so well managed. This slows pupils' learning so that they do not all build as well as they should on the good start they get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not done as well as they should in the past. Provision for these pupils is beginning to improve, but these pupils still do not all have individual

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education plans that identify precisely how to move their learning on. Pupils who are given individual adult support are sometimes overly dependent on it.

Other aspects of pastoral care are good and, as a result, pupils feel safe at school. This pleases parents, one of whom explained, 'I have nothing but praise for the school and the positive attitude it has towards the children and their well-being.'

Behaviour in almost all lessons and around the school is good, and sometimes exemplary. Pupils get on well with each other. They grow in confidence and self-esteem, and their improving attendance attests to their enjoyment of school. They show a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and exercise. They get plenty of the latter through the many extra-curricular sports in which they take part and in which some achieve distinction. Pupils conscientiously take responsibility within the school community. They were involved last year, for example, in questioning prospective headteachers. They take part enthusiastically in musical and other events in the local community and church, but they have less awareness of other ways of life elsewhere in Britain. They help to raise funds for international charities, but they have a stereotypical view of life in the developing world.

In the words of a parent, 'I believe that the school is a much better place now than the last time inspectors came, but it could still do more.' The headteacher, leaders, staff and governors readily agree. Although there is further to go, the good progress that they have already achieved over the past year, coupled with their accurate picture of the school and sharp delineation of priorities, together demonstrate Westwood's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the autumn term 2010, raise standards by
 - ensuring that teachers throughout the school are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons
 - matching work in all lessons to pupils' different capabilities
 - ensuring that all marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by the start of the summer term 2010 by
 - having in place individual education plans that identify specific targets for moving their learning on
 - ensuring that pupils with one-to-one support in lessons are helped to become independent learners.
- Develop the curriculum by the start of spring term 2011 so that
 - stimulating topics and other activities are planned on a two-year cycle that enables pupils to avoid repetition and helps them to build on what they have learnt before

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- pupils have the opportunity to practise and apply their writing and problem-solving skills across subjects other than English and mathematics
 - pupils are given opportunities to learn more about other cultures and ways of life around the world and in modern Britain.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' work seen in lessons and in their books shows that attainment is now average, with pupils now achieving satisfactorily. This is an improvement on previous years, where the slow progress in Years 3 and 4 led to below average standards in the Year 6 national tests. Progress is now at least satisfactory throughout Key Stage 2. In some classes, pupils are making good progress. The work in Years 5 and 6, in particular, shows that pupils are increasingly catching up on previously lost ground. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, although teachers in Years 1 and 2 are not all adept at settling their pupils so that they make best use of lesson time.

Throughout the school, boys and girls make similar progress. More able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should in those lessons where work is not matched to their ability. On occasion, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make slower progress than they should where, for example, they are not given enough help to structure their writing.

Pupils' good personal development is evident in their enthusiasm and their positive attitudes in lessons. The impact of Westwood's Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards can be readily seen in the pupils' keen participation in sports.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2

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

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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Although there are still some inconsistencies that have yet to be ironed out, teaching has improved. There are no longer pockets in the school where pupils routinely make inadequate progress. Teachers motivate pupils well. They clearly set out the learning intention for each lesson, along with success criteria that help the pupils to assess how well they are doing. In this way, pupils are taking more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are increasingly taking account of pupils' responses in planning their next lessons. However, not all match work to pupils' different abilities, nor to address the specific needs of those pupils who need extra help with their learning.

A common feature of lessons is teachers' good use of information and communication technology to present information to the class. In each classroom, there is a visualiser as well as an interactive whiteboard, so teachers are able to project and to present to the class pages from books and even three-dimensional objects. Inspectors saw relatively few examples, however, of pupils themselves making use of this technology. Subjects such as history and geography are generally taught through topics. The success of these varies widely in the school. There are excellent examples of topic work giving pupils the opportunity to develop and apply their literacy skills, but there are some classes where too many tasks involve low level colouring in or cut and paste activities.

Partnership arrangements with other schools have enabled the school to pool and share the cost of some specialist provision to counsel pupils who need extra support as well as staff training. There are good arrangements for dealing with first aid and pupils' welfare, and this is appreciated by parents and by the pupils. School leaders have correctly identified shortcomings in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and have already begun the process of making improvements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

3

How effective are leadership and management?

Governors describe the last inspection as 'a wake up call'. It certainly prompted them to take a more focused role. They identified that they had previously been overly dependent on the headteacher for information about the school, and they have made use of training and local authority support to gain a much firmer handle on standards and rates of progress. As a result, they have contributed to the shared drive for improvement, although they postponed their plans for a programme of visits to directly observe provision. The leadership team has been reorganised so that, in addition to the new headteacher, several other leaders are quite new to their roles at Westwood. Nevertheless, they have drawn well on the school's tight systems for tracking pupils' progress so that they have an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing and of what is needed to move them on at a faster rate. In this, the school's very focused 'single plan' to improve teaching and standards is a helpful tool because it sets very clear targets against which progress can be measured.

Parents comment that, 'Communication between school and home is now much better.' Workshops and a family learning programme have boosted support to children and their families. This, and the links being developed with local groups through the well used community hall facilities, makes a positive contribution to community cohesion. However, pupils have had relatively few opportunities to learn about other communities in Britain and overseas. The shortcomings to date in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities mean that equal opportunities are promoted only satisfactorily, despite the good gender equality at the school. Safeguarding procedures meet the latest statutory requirements, although the school's policies mostly follow the local authority model without specific application to the school's specific circumstances. Governors recently identified that they have been overly dependent on a staff governor for their health and safety checks. They have agreed that another governor should take on this role in order to provide an independent view.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly when they start in the Reception Year because they benefit from good arrangements for helping them to get to know the school before they start. Children mirror the very good care and support they receive from adults by showing consideration to each other. They are encouraged to become independent and responsible, and rapidly develop in confidence and maturity. Children enjoy lessons, concentrate well and work collaboratively.

Although there are small variations from year to year, standards are broadly in line with age related expectations when children start school. The exception is communication, language and literacy where standards are lower. The excellent teaching of phonics enables children to make very rapid progress in their literacy skills. In other areas of learning, good teaching enables children to make good progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, standards are at least in line with and often above age related expectations. As one very satisfied parent wrote, 'My son has learned loads!' While the curriculum supports children's development in all aspects of learning, the outdoor environment does not provide them with the same stimulus as the attractive and well-resourced classroom. In particular, there is a notable absence of pictures and print outside to prompt and guide children's learning as they explore through play.

Systems for assessing children's progress are rigorous. As a result, staff know the children's capabilities well and plan useful activities to help them develop further. Parents are closely involved in their children's learning and participate in the several workshops run by the school. Effective links with other pre-school providers enhance the school's transition arrangements and there are appropriate arrangements to ease children's move to Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Only a small proportion of parents returned questionnaires. Of those, most expressed positive views about the school. Some parents still have concerns that date back to the period when the school was issued with a notice to improve, but many comment on the improvements they have seen over the past year. A significant minority of parents voice worries about the way behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors saw good behaviour in the great majority of lessons and around the school, although there were occasional lapses in some infant lessons. Pupils confirmed that incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westwood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	34	25	66	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	42	22	58	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	26	23	61	5	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	26	24	63	3	8	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	13	36	21	58	2	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	38	20	54	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	21	27	71	3	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	19	25	78	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	24	24	65	3	8	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	19	24	65	6	16	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	38	20	54	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	27	22	67	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	36	21	58	1	3	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood Primary School, Benfleet, SS7 2SU

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to visit your school. The school has improved a lot. Your new headteacher, other school leaders, staff and governors all work well together as a team, and we were pleased to see how ambitious they are for you to be doing even better. Westwood is providing you with a satisfactory education, so that you are now reaching standards appropriate for your ages. We have decided that Westwood no longer needs a notice to improve.

The school helps you feel safe and secure, but we have asked staff to give priority to giving clearer targets and guidance for those of you who need extra help with your learning. We have also asked them to make sure that those of you who get individual support are helped to become more independent. You get on well together and you behave well in almost all lessons, but there were a couple of infant lessons where children were slow to settle and that meant they made less progress than they should. We have asked the school to look out for that, so that children do as well in Years 1 and 2 as they do in the Reception Year. We have also asked teachers to make sure that they always set you work that is at the right level. Often they do just that, but we also saw that there are occasions when work is too easy for some of you and too difficult for others. It is good to see that you know your targets and are increasingly involved in assessing your own and each other's work. The success criteria that the teachers give you in every lesson are really helping there. We have asked teachers to make sure that all marking is as good as the best, so that you all have a clear picture of what you need to do to improve. You can help here by always reading your teachers' comments and doing your very best to follow their advice.

Some of you are really enthusiastic about the topics you are learning, but these are not always as exciting as they could be. We have asked the school to review the curriculum and the way topics are taught. We want them to take particular care to ensure that none of you repeat work that you have done before, and we have asked them to give you more opportunities to practise and apply your writing and problem-solving skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. We would also like you to learn more about different people and ways of life elsewhere in Britain and the world.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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