

Westgate Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120691
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339758
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Hopkins
Headteacher	Mr Tim Culpin
Date of previous school inspection	5 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, many others very briefly, and two assemblies. Two joint lesson observations were carried out with the headteacher and his deputy. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at the school improvement plan, assessment information, policies and procedures - particularly those related to safeguarding - minutes of the governing body's meetings, information on recent monitoring activities and curriculum planning documents. Inspection questionnaire returns were received from 99 parents, 102 pupils and 38 staff.

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

- the progress of current year groups in mathematics and what lies behind their slower progress in mathematics compared to English
- the evidence of pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning
- the reasons behind the exclusion of a few pupils
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the impact of the monitoring work of senior staff on improving classroom practice, especially as a number of newly qualified teachers have recently replaced more senior staff.

Information about the school

This school is around twice the size of the average primary. Fewer pupils are entitled to free school meals than is usual nationally. Three in every four pupils are of White British heritage; others come from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils who use English as an additional language is below average, and very few are in the early stages of learning English. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual time.

Five senior staff have left the school for promotion in recent months. A deputy headteacher has recently joined the staff. The other senior posts vacated have been filled by internal candidates.

The school holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Westgate Junior is a good and improving school. It has some outstanding features, particularly in the way which pupils contribute to the community and the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard them. All groups of pupils make good progress in their learning. They leave the school with above average attainment having entered Year 3 at broadly average levels. English, especially writing, has been the main improvement priority in recent years. As a result, attainment and progress in English have risen strongly and a gap has opened up between the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. The school is in the early stages of addressing the slower progress in mathematics. Pupils make good gains in their personal development, with the great majority leaving school as thoughtful, articulate young people capable of working well as individuals and in groups.

The teachers, a number of whom are at the start of their careers, are a hardworking enthusiastic team and they are keen to do their best for the pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There has been a very successful focus on improving the teaching of writing. The school's leaders rightly recognise that improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is the next key priority for further improvement. Lesson observations during the inspection fully support this view, as the English lessons seen were better than those in mathematics. Most lessons are well structured and taught in an atmosphere of very positive relationships between adults and pupils. Good use of new technology and small-group work were other positive features seen in lessons. However, in mathematics the levels of challenge and support were not always well matched to pupils' needs and the marking of pupils' work did not provide enough guidance on how to improve. Discussions with senior and middle leaders also established that there is not yet a shared view on what elements in the mathematics curriculum require improvement. While the curriculum is good overall, the use of mathematics in other subjects is a less well developed feature. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils remains good.

Under the calm, inspiring direction of the headteacher, good leadership has been developed at all levels. There is a strong emphasis on using teams to tackle areas for improvement. This makes the school more resilient when senior and other staff leave. The school improvement plan is centred on the right priorities. Monitoring and evaluation work is effectively informed by a good set of activities, including seeking pupils' views about lessons and learning. While the school has an effective way of tracking the attainment of all pupils, the tracking of pupils' progress is much less developed, as the school does not have a user-friendly, computer-based system. As a result, opportunities are missed to evaluate, sharply and quickly, the impact of different

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aspects of improvement work. The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support for school leaders. Based on the track record of improvement in writing, attendance and the curriculum, accurate self-evaluation and effective teamwork, it is clear that the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by:
 - - identifying and focusing on the elements in the curriculum that pupils find most difficult
 - - ensuring that staff consistently provide enough challenge for the more able, better informed support for the less able, more links with other subjects and better quality of marking of pupils' work
 - - regular, accurate monitoring of the progress of individuals and groups.
- Update the school's system to track the progress of individuals and groups, so that data on pupils' progress inform and guide the school improvement work of leaders at all levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils greatly enjoy school life, both in and outside of lessons. They listen carefully, behave well and work hard, making a vital contribution to their good achievement. While inspectors saw pupils make good progress overall, their progress was not as strong in mathematics as in English or science. This picture closely matches recent test results and the school's data on the progress of current year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.

The school is a calm, orderly place where pupils know and respect the rules. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is consistently good. A small number of pupils, with significant social and emotional difficulties, have had some fixed term exclusions despite the school's helpful measures to support them and their families. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in school and that bullying and name calling were rare. Pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and this shines through in their mature and sensible attitudes, especially those of older pupils, towards each other and their community. Pupils are well informed about how to keep healthy and act on this knowledge. Participation rates in physical activities are high. The school's success in this area is reflected in the Healthy Schools award.

Pupils from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds and of differing abilities are very proud of their school and make an excellent contribution to it and to the wider community. As well as having an active and well regarded school council, older pupils assume a range of other leadership positions, such as in the playground. A recent school

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check showed that three-quarters of the pupils have some local community involvement. These are through sport, musical performances, charitable work or the Lincolnshire Award for Film Teamwork and Achievement, where a group of Year 3 pupils recently won first prize in the animated film section.

Pupils' attendance is above average. They develop a good work ethic which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. They are punctual, polite and work very well in teams.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils said that lessons are enjoyable and interesting and inspectors agree. New technologies are used well to stimulate interest and to make sure pupils have a clear understanding of the objectives of lessons. For example, in a Year 3 writing lesson, pupils were spellbound as they made notes on different features, such as sound, colour, character and setting of the film Polar Express. This stimulated their thinking and, in some cases, extended their vocabulary. The regular use of 'talking partners' contributes to pupils' subject understanding as they explain their thinking to others and gain insights

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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from the views of their friends.

Most lessons are well planned. Activities are adapted carefully to meet the needs of the range of learners. Teachers check pupils' understanding by using focused questions, and review towards the end of lessons is usually well used to reinforce and deepen learning. Marking of English work is effective, but weaker in mathematics, where there is noticeably less emphasis on telling pupils how they can improve.

In recent years, the curriculum has become more meaningful and enjoyable for pupils. Growing links between subjects are a striking feature. English skills are effectively reinforced in other lessons, while information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in other subjects. Other initiatives include a daily 'thinking skills' session as part of an extended registration. All pupils learn French. There is an excellent range of after-school clubs. As well as several sports and music clubs, there are film, art and craft, martial arts, Irish dancing, and ICT activities where pupils make video games. Pupils' personal development is well supported by the comprehensive Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme and the many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups in lessons.

The school works well to provide support and care for all pupils, including those needing extra support. As a result, all pupils make good progress, not only in their learning, but also in attitudes, behaviour, confidence and relationships. Pupils say they know staff will always listen 'because they want what's best for us'. The transition arrangements with the infant, partner schools are very good. The school has worked hard and effectively to find alternative education for a few pupils with serious, social and emotional difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's inspiring leadership has led to improvements in important aspects of the school's work. Pupils' progress in writing has been improved greatly, the curriculum is much improved and pupils' attendance has risen. The fact that three senior leaders have recently taken up headships elsewhere is testament to how successfully the school develops its people. The new, senior leadership team are effectively deployed. For example, a key priority for the new, deputy headteacher is to support and develop staff who are new to teaching. Morale is high and there is a well-justified belief that the school is going forward.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent and their importance permeates all aspects of the

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school's life. The headteacher has a very clear overview of all who are considered vulnerable, while the views of parents and pupils have made an important contribution to the school's procedures. The school's response to community cohesion is good. It has a clear action plan and evaluates success in terms of the impact on pupils and the community. Its work to promote equality is good, with little difference in the achievement of different groups. Communication with parents is good, and the school has plans to strengthen these links by making this area a priority for one of the senior leaders. Successful partnerships with the infant schools and community groups have a substantial impact on the school's ability to support pupils and their parents.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Overall, a large majority of those who returned the survey are happy with their children's experience at this school. Particularly high proportions agreed that their child enjoyed school and were kept safe. A number of parents have concerns about how unacceptable behaviour is handled, the progress made by their child and how parents are helped to support their children's learning. Inspectors found no evidence of bullying or other unacceptable behaviour. They found that the progress of learners was good overall, although slower in mathematics than in English. As part of the remit of a new, senior leader, the school plans to take forward the help it provides for parents to support their child's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westgate Junior 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 395 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	47	44	47	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	46	48	52	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	27	58	62	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	32	50	54	11	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	37	52	56	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	39	45	48	12	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	39	54	58	2	2	1	1
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)	37	40	43	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	27	55	59	9	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	23	54	58	10	11	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	25	59	63	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	43	46	49	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	43	45	48	4	4	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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 pupils' 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.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westgate Junior School, Lincoln LN1 3BQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your classes. You helped us to get to know your school and this letter is to tell you what we found during the inspection.

It was delightful to see that you enjoy your lessons, where you settle to work quickly and try hard. You told us you were proud of your school and we agree it is a good one. We were impressed with the way Mr Culpin leads the school and how hard and enthusiastically the staff work. As a result, you make good progress in your learning and in how you are developing as junior school children.

We thought your behaviour was good at all times. You and your parents told us how much you enjoy coming to school. You know what you need to do to keep safe and healthy. We were particularly impressed with the part that you, the pupils - especially the older ones - play in the life of the school through your work as junior road safety officers, for example. You have a very good variety of after-school clubs and good opportunities to represent the school, such as the Lincolnshire Award for Film Teamwork and Achievement, sporting and musical events. Teachers and other adults care well for all the children.

The school wants to get even better and we try to help them with this. Here are two things they will be working on in the future.

We have asked the school to improve how well you learn in mathematics lessons.

We have also asked the school to update how it tracks your progress and to use the new system to consider how best to move you forward in your learning.

We are sure you will continue to work hard and help the school to go from strength to strength

Yours sincerely

Jim Griffin

Lead Inspector

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