

# Westley Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124807
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	340660
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roderick Passant

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	468
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Belinda Bell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Templeton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Oliver Road Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 23 lessons or part lessons, and observed 23 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils from all year groups, governors, members of the senior leadership team and some heads of department. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including policies relating to safeguarding and the school improvement plan. Questionnaires returned by 248 parents and 243 pupils were scrutinised.

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

- the rigour of the use of the school's system to monitor progress and its use to target additional support to pupils
- the effectiveness of the school's systems for self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

This middle school is broadly average in size. Almost all pupils are from a White British background and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement detailing their specific needs is above average because the school has an attached unit for up to nine pupils with hearing impairment. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and the Sportsmark and Artsmark awards. The current headteacher's appointment was made substantive in September 2009 after a year in an acting capacity. In September 2009, Suffolk County Council announced a review of the timetable for the implementation of the school organisation in the local area. The re-organisation of this school is not planned to be implemented before September 2017.

**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

The school has a good local reputation, is oversubscribed and parents' questionnaires indicate that the overwhelming majority of parents are confident in the school's work. While the school's good overall effectiveness is similar to the previous inspection, it has continued to improve and sustained its previous outstanding features. This has been achieved against a background of uncertainty about the future of the school and a period of acting headship. The school's leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths, based on departmental reviews. The school uses outcomes from monitoring its work to target appropriate priorities for development in the school improvement plan, although the success criteria for the various objectives and the steps to achieve them are not always precise enough. Despite this relative weakness, the school's ongoing improvement, supported by good governance, shows that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils achieve well; they make good progress overall and reach above expected standards by the end of Year 8. Progress tends to accelerate in Years 7 and 8. Pupils enjoy school a very great deal, which is reflected in their high attendance and in the high proportion of pupils who participate in the many rich and exciting opportunities outside the formal curriculum. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are confident that staff will address any issues that they might have effectively and, consequently, pupils feel exceptionally safe. They have mature, considerate attitudes and the school is a friendly and a very cohesive community with older pupils taking their responsibilities for themselves and each other extremely well. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory; they have relatively limited opportunities to develop their awareness of the rich diversity of modern society.

Pupils' progress is now monitored with rigour and staff use this information with increasing effectiveness to match tasks to different learning needs. Teaching is good in the large majority of lessons, although the quality of marking is inconsistent.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school improvement plan identifies more precisely what it is aiming to achieve, detailing the steps in the process and how it will judge whether the objective has been reached.
  - Broaden pupils' cultural horizons by establishing links with schools in differing circumstances in this country.
  - Ensure that pupils' work is marked regularly, points for improvement identified

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previously in their work are followed up and pupils are given additional information to further improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils make good progress in the large majority of lessons because they are focused on learning and prepared to participate fully so that there is a purposeful ethos in lessons and around the school. Pupils make good overall progress during their time in school because from broadly average starting points when they join the school in Year 5, they reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above expectations by the end of Year 8. That said, the rate of progress and when it occurs differs between subjects so that, for example, in science and mathematics there is greater acceleration in Years 7 and 8. Standards in Year 8 show improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils with hearing impairment, make good progress because of the high-quality support they receive. Interventions, such as the extensive one-to-one support to those pupils who require additional catch-up or support, which pupils report as being extremely helpful, make a significant contribution to their overall progress. Pupils respond well to the specialist subject teaching and resources, and ascribe their more rapid progress to the development of their independent learning skills and the fact that more is demanded of them in the older years.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; there is a particularly high take-up of sports activities. Given their basic skills, very positive attitudes to learning and social maturity, pupils develop well the basic skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers provide good opportunities for paired work, encouraging pupils to work together in developing their own ideas, supported by effective questioning and well-targeted praise. The very positive relationships that staff have with pupils, underpins pupils' collaborative approach to learning. Lessons are varied and interesting. There has been improvement in the use of assessment data so that in most lessons planning takes into account the specific needs of pupils. This is particularly so in the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons seen where teaching was satisfactory, the management of learning was weaker because either the pace of the lesson was too slow or not enough was asked of pupils so that they carried out tasks without necessarily developing their knowledge or understanding. While there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their work, the school's clear marking policy is currently not applied consistently so that pupils do not always have regular and detailed advice on how to improve or, when given, it is not always followed up.

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' good academic achievement and, along with the personal, social, health and citizenship education, makes a good contribution to their personal development, aspects of which are outstanding. The excellent enrichment opportunities provide pupils with wide-ranging opportunities to achieve success and foster their very positive attitudes and enjoyment of learning. Some, such as the residential experiences, are particularly memorable. Opportunities to develop a broader awareness of the diversity of other cultures are limited. The school is at an early stage in developing cross-curricular links in different subjects for Years 7 and 8.

Outstanding care, guidance and supports ensure that pupils are known and valued as individuals. Because of the more sophisticated monitoring of pupils' progress, the school is now able to target support to individuals particularly well. Pupils who are troubled, upset or facing challenging circumstances are supported extremely well. Pupils from the Hearing Impaired Unit receive very good support to facilitate their inclusion in mainstream lessons and, as a result, they make equally good progress in learning across the school. Staff are united in their shared commitment to the pupils and their welfare so that pupils refer to adults in the school as being 'kind and fair'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management across the school are good and build on the school's many existing strengths. The headteacher provides good leadership. He is clearly ambitious for the school and, together with the senior leadership team, is driving improvement forward. The headteacher has an accurate perception of the strengths in teaching and recognises that marking in particular remains inconsistent. There is strong teamwork across the school and a strong, shared ethos and commitment to raising pupils' achievement. For example, the introduction of the one-to-one support is targeted well and has proved effective in increasing pupils' progress.

Governors are supportive and hold the school to account for its work. The governing body is well organised through its committee structure and is currently reviewing school policies in a systematic manner. The governing body has gained the Financial Management of Schools award in recognition of managing finances well. Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously by ensuring that the school is a safe place, with the result that safeguarding is good. The school promotes equality of opportunity well with no evidence of discrimination seen during the inspection. For example, the school provides effective support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those who may be vulnerable for one reason or another to ensure they are fully included in all the school offers. The school has outstanding links to extend pupils' learning experiences and to provide specialist support to individuals. These links make a very significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. The school has a strong sense of community with pupils taking responsibility for each other, and has established extensive links with the local community. While the curriculum fosters awareness of other religions and there is a link with a Japanese school, the school lacks a clear plan to broaden pupils' cultural awareness of the diverse society in which we live. The school has established a well-attended parents' forum specifically to listen to parents' views; the school works hard to keep parents informed, for example, through its website, newsletters and trial text messaging service.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents agreed that their child enjoys school, that they were happy with their child's experience at this school, that it kept them safe, they were making enough progress, that teaching was good and that it was led and managed effectively. Most parents thought that the school met their child's needs, they were informed about their child's progress, it helped their child develop a healthy lifestyle and helped them to support their child's learning. A very large majority thought that the school took into account parents' suggestions and concerns. Inspectors agree with parents positive views. A few parents had concerns about the school's management of behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view. Overall behaviour is excellent because the school has a very clear system of positive behaviour management, which is understood by the pupils and is consistently implemented. A few parents disagreed that the school helps parents support their child's learning. Inspection evidence shows that the school has organised specific parents' meetings to help parents support their children's learning, for example, in mathematics.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westley Middle 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 248 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 468 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	52	114	46	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	143	58	102	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	112	45	126	51	6	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	121	49	120	48	6	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	117	47	124	50	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	34	144	58	10	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	41	137	55	5	2	1	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)	92	37	139	56	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	110	44	127	51	5	2	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	106	43	124	50	9	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	91	37	127	51	7	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	137	55	107	43	1	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	148	60	91	37	3	1	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westley Middle School, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3JB

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. My particular thanks go to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. We were most impressed by your very mature and thoughtful responses to our questions. I would like to share with you the team's findings.

This is a good school, which ensures that you make good progress so that you achieve standards by the end of Year 8, which are above those seen in many schools. Aspects of your personal development are outstanding. Your behaviour is excellent and, because you have confidence that the staff would tackle effectively any issues that might concern you, you feel exceptionally safe. You have an excellent understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and you make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. You play and work together extremely well; you are confident and articulate and have very positive attitudes to learning because you gain success from a very wide range of exciting learning opportunities. Your awareness of other cultures and the diverse nature of our society is satisfactory. I have asked the school to develop more opportunities to link with schools in different circumstances in this country and elsewhere in the world.

You have skilled teachers. All adults care about you a great deal and provide you with extremely effective support. I have asked the headteacher to work with staff to ensure that your work is marked regularly and gives you a clear idea of what you need to do in order to improve. The school is led well by the headteacher, his team and staff with responsibilities across the school. The school draws up an action plan to identify what the school needs to do in order to improve. I have asked the headteacher to ensure that this plan identifies more clearly how they will judge whether they have achieved their objective successfully.

The school has improved since it was last inspected. I have no doubt that if you maintain your very positive attitudes to learning this process of improvement will continue.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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