

Westfield Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134742
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	354385
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms M Coghlin
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Sherriff
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom considered the school's safeguarding procedures. All teachers were seen in the classroom and inspectors visited 17 lessons or part lessons. They held meetings with pupils, members of the school council, parents and carers, staff, governors and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school improvement plan, data on the monitoring of internal progress, governing body reports, safeguarding policies and pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed 30 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 86 completed by pupils and 42 returned by staff.

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

- Pupils' achievement across the school.
- The impact of the school's work to raise attendance.
- How and with what impact the school attempts to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of its pupils.
- The impact of the 'phase approach' and the contribution made by middle leaders to promoting the school's improvement.
- Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This larger than average-sized school was formed in 2005, following the amalgamation of two local primary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is three times the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that usually found. The school population is predominantly White British and there are few pupils at early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The school operates as a Surestart children's centre and the provision for wraparound care will be inspected separately and receive a separate report which will be available on the Ofsted website. The school is also a resourced school for the local authority and offers places to pupils with low-severity autism or speech and language difficulties.

Westfield holds National Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark. It has been identified as a National College Leadership Development School. It also holds the Cabinet Office Award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school which fosters pupils' personal and academic development exceptionally well. Complacency has no part in Westfield. Staff in each phase, joined by governors, play an active part in gauging performance in all areas of school life. As a result, teachers believe their work is never finished and continue to build upon excellence, in relation to the outstanding procedures for teachers' assessment, for example. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school establishes very well-founded procedures to facilitate ongoing improvement and to enhance the learning experiences of the pupils in its care. The school has, therefore, outstanding capacity for further improvement and provides excellent value for money.

Children get off to a first-class start in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. Thereafter, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to achieve well and make excellent progress in both key stages. From generally exceptionally low levels of skills on entry to the Nursery, their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 and increasing numbers are reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' personal outcomes are of the highest order too. Their behaviour is outstanding, they have an enviable understanding of the importance of a balanced diet and of how to keep themselves fit and they feel entirely safe in school. As they say, 'Everyone looks after everyone else here!' Leaders have introduced, with a good deal of success, a variety of initiatives to involve parents and carers even more with the work of the school and with their children's learning.

The curriculum leads the way in meeting pupils' individual needs and, each step of the way, it raises pupils' aspirations and encourages them to reach for the highest standards in everything they do. Pupils make very positive comments about the 'Adventure-based Learning' project and say that it builds their confidence and, in their words, 'Gets us to do things we never thought we could!' Pupils burst into spontaneous applause when they see a nervous pupil complete the very challenging climbing wall: they are delighted when their classmates succeed.

Outstanding pastoral care underpins everything the school tries to do. The proactive learning mentors and the highly talented team of teaching assistants are ever at work supporting their charges and encouraging them to persevere and to feel proud of their efforts. Parents and carers recognise this and comment: 'The school helps our children so much. We couldn't ask for anything more.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Build on the range of projects already established to encourage parents and carers to engage even more with the school and with their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enter school in the morning with smiles on their faces and eager to learn. When it is a 'first in day' they run into the playground to make sure they are not late, hoping to win a prize for punctuality. They love their school, have a high regard for the adults who work with them and enjoy the wealth of activities they are offered. They want to succeed and give of their best in everything they do. As a result, the learning and progress of all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are outstanding. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in the current Year 6 classes are reaching broadly average standards and are on course to meet their targets. Their writing is improving apace and they can summarise stories with skill, using the correct terminology with the utmost accuracy. Their numeracy skills are also improving apace and pupils in Year 4 can transpose equivalent fractions into decimals with real confidence.

Older pupils and play leaders are proud to act as role models for their younger counterparts, who they support well. The school council represents the views of its constituents effectively and its members have put forward a wide range of suggestions to improve the school further, in relation to the design of the playgrounds for example. Pupils show great awareness of the needs of others and their extensive work for charity is a byword in the local community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They appreciate and understand other faiths and cultures through their links with a school in India. The school provides them with many opportunities for reflection during assemblies. When asked what their headteacher's favourite word is during assembly, they answer with one voice, 'progress!' An ethos of mutual respect and the maintenance of individual dignity run throughout the school and pupils' self-esteem benefits as a consequence.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

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 feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers recognise the strong link between pupils' personal development and the progress they make in their academic work. Learning objectives, therefore, emphasise the raising of pupils' aspirations and confidence too and pupils receive praise for their efforts throughout each lesson. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are warm and there are high levels of engagement in learning throughout lessons. Teachers motivate their pupils through humour and fascinate them by the use of engaging strategies, when they introduce them to 'magic maths' and also introduce them to a Victorian 'coal hewer' in Year 6 for example. The use of talk partners is very effective in encouraging pupils to act as a resource for each other and pupils enjoy sharing their ideas with their classmates and taking responsibility for their own learning. The school is in the vanguard of exemplary assessment practice. The 'cohort profiles' designed by senior leaders and the excellent system to monitor progress highlight any possible underachievement rapidly and inform bespoke support to meet the needs of individuals. Marking is of a high order and pupils receive detailed advice on how they can improve their work.

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding 'Context for Learning' (CFL) curriculum, which provides interesting, motivational and varied activities to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of individual classes and of individual pupils. CFL makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and the Adventure-based Learning elements provide pupils with activities, archery for example, which would not normally be open to them. Activities to foster pupils' enterprise skills encourage them to look to the future and the range of themed weeks enable them to see the links between subjects and reinforce key skills across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their visits to museums, theatres and art galleries and say, 'We have a fantastic number of school activities.' Indeed, it is a joy to hear the choir, and the African drumming lifts the spirit! The daily celebration of pupils' successes is a vital element of the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. The raising of pupils' self-esteem is second nature to all staff and there is no academic–pastoral divide in Westfield. Learning mentors and teaching assistants give unfailingly of their time to ensure that each

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individual derives the maximum benefit from what the school has to offer. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable make the same progress as their classmates because of the comprehensive support, and also challenge, they receive. The links with outside agencies for the benefit of pupils are strong and the partnerships with the various providers within school are of the same high quality.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding headteacher, a highly talented senior team and perceptive middle managers lead by example and engender high levels of teamwork among staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Governors, too, are actively involved in all areas of school life and they lead a range of initiatives with skill and verve. They have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and hold leaders to account with the utmost rigour. The 'phase approach' straddles years and key stages and ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met closely and that the full staff team plays a proactive part in evaluating the school's performance. As staff say, 'We know we will never be perfect, but we are always looking for ways to enhance the learning experiences of our pupils.'

The school is a calm and harmonious community. Equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in all its forms are central to its ethos and each individual pupil can take full advantage of everything on offer. As a result, pupils believe in themselves and look to the future with enthusiasm. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are outstanding and are recognised as such by pupils and their parents and carers, who say that the school keeps their offspring safe.

The school engages with parents and carers well and has established a range of initiatives to encourage greater home–school understanding. Attendance, which is now average, has improved as a result. Parents and carers believe that staff are approachable and always on hand if problems arise.

Partnerships within school and outside its walls demonstrate an exceptional impact on pupils' development both academically and personally. Links with Manchester University, for example, encourage pupils to set their sights higher and spur them on to reach, and in many cases exceed, their challenging targets.

Through the school's impressive promotion of community cohesion, pupils have a good

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understanding of cultures and religions which are different from their own. Pupils raise money to support two school children in India and they value the many opportunities they have to celebrate the diversity within the United Kingdom and also further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Joy in learning, excellent relationships between children and adults and an exceptional range of resources, both indoors and outside, are the key features of this outstanding setting. Although they vary from year to year, children generally arrive in the Nursery with exceptionally low levels of skills for their age. They make excellent progress in both Nursery and Reception as a result of targeted support, outstanding teaching which meets their needs and an overriding emphasis on enabling children to become independent learners. Exploration, investigation and fun are the key components of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outdoor area is invariably a hive of activity and the learning is often led by the children themselves. 'Do you want an ice cream?' and 'Would you like to wash the baby?' resound as children invite all adults, and visitors too, to join them in their learning. Behaviour and engagement are very impressive indeed and children are delighted to show off their work. Indeed, they have the highest regard for the adults who work with them and say, 'This is our big family!'

Leadership and management are outstanding and the leader is actively involved in all aspects of the phase. There are excellent links with other providers within the school and the flexible key worker initiative ensures that individuals' progress is tracked closely. Assessment is comprehensive and the record sheets are focused and include accurate evaluations of children's progress and the next steps in learning, to ensure that progress

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is maintained. In line with provision in the main school, the welfare of children receives the highest priority and safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Excellent induction procedures enable children to settle down quickly into their new surroundings and children in Reception are prepared very effectively for the rigours of Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a very small return (7%) of the Ofsted questionnaire, but many more parents and carers returned the school's internal questionnaires. Those who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and what it does for their sons and daughters. All of these parents and carers judge that their children are safe in school and they believe that their children enjoy school. A very small minority of parents and carers are of the view that the school does not deal effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence of this. Indeed, they judge pupils' behaviour in class and around the school to be outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westfield Community 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 399 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	57	12	40	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	50	15	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	53	12	40	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	60	11	37	1	3	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)	15	50	14	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	43	14	47	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	30	19	63	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	77	7	23	0	0	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). 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">■ 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.



26 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westfield Community School, Wigan, WN5 9XN

Thank you so much for the marvellous welcome you gave to me and to my colleagues when we visited your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to come and talk to us on Monday. We really enjoyed listening to the choir and to the drummers and watching you use the climbing wall was quite fascinating! I would now like to tell you what we think about your school.

Westfield is an outstanding school and we know that you are so proud of it. You make excellent progress in your work because your teachers teach you exceptionally well and because you work so hard. We think your behaviour is brilliant and you look after each other, particularly the 'little ones' in Reception and Nursery, very well. You get many opportunities during the day, at lunchtimes and after school to take part in a wide variety of clubs and activities and you really enjoy the many trips you attend. You really like the adventure-based learning which offers you sporting activities, archery for example. All the adults who work with you care for and look after you wonderfully and this means that you are growing in confidence all the time.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are always looking for ways to make Westfield even better. I would like to help them do this and so I have asked them to work even harder to encourage your parents and carers to come into school and join in some of the activities. You can play your part in this by encouraging those at home to attend as many school activities as they can!

Thank you once again for being so kind, polite and friendly to us.

Best wishes to you all.

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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