

Westlea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126279
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315471
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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 on roll	
School	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Hogton
Headteacher	Suzanne Seaton
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2005
School address	Langstone Way Westlea Down Swindon SN5 7BT
Telephone number	01793 870469
Fax number	01793 882992

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average for a primary school. Most pupils are White British. The school has proportionally more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than most primary schools as it has a unit for pupils with physical impairment attended by nine pupils. Since the school was last inspected, the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language has risen from 4% to 14%, which is higher than most primary schools. The school has Healthy School status and Artsmark Gold and Dyslexia Friendly awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides its pupils with a well rounded education. It has some outstanding features. The exceptionally high quality of care makes a strong contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and ensures that all pupils are successfully included in school life.

The school's welcoming atmosphere, tight organisation and attention for individuals help pupils to settle early on and build their confidence. Good leadership and teamwork have successfully managed a rising pupil turnover and an increasing proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language over the last three years. Regular checks on pupils' progress identify where to intervene with alternative approaches or additional support for learning. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate but would benefit from deeper analysis of data. Recent initiatives to improve writing standards are having a positive impact and the school plans to adopt similar strategies to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics. The school has improved since its last inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage gets children off to a good start to their education. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, many pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Good literacy and numeracy standards, together with excellent social skills and attitudes to learning, make a good contribution to pupils' future economic well-being. The good quality of teaching and a carefully planned curriculum help pupils to achieve well. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and attend well. They work productively because lessons are enjoyable and purposeful, with plenty of engaging practical and creative activities. Some teaching is outstanding and its sharp focus enables pupils to make rapid progress. However, pupils' progress is slower in Years 1 and 2 because teaching does not always concentrate on the precise steps needed to move pupils forward in their learning. The school organises many activities that enrich pupils' learning in and out of school. A wide range of educational trips, visitors and stimulating experiences makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement, their personal development and their enjoyment of school. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding and manifests itself in the mature way pupils express their views and their consideration of the feelings of others.

The school works in effective partnership with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. The Special Resource Provision (SRP) for pupils with physical impairment is exceptionally well managed and staff have high levels of expertise. Every effort is made to ensure the pupils in the SRP are integrated into school life as fully as possible and their relationships with staff and their classmates are excellent. Pupils at the early stages of learning English receive the necessary support to achieve as well as the rest of their peers, whilst helping them to integrate successfully into a culture different from their own.

Parents and carers of about a third of the pupils responded to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire. The large majority of these were overwhelmingly positive about the school, particularly the care and approachability of staff and the range of activities on offer. A small proportion of respondents made observations about aspects of communication which they felt would benefit from review.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although each group varies, children start in Reception with skills that are slightly below those expected for their age overall. Personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills are relatively weaker areas, and knowledge and understanding of the world stronger. Effective assessment, careful planning, and good teaching enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of their Reception Year, most children reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Staff provide good role models and very clear guidance for the children and are skilled at developing their understanding through questions and explanations. There is a good range and balance of interesting teacher-led and child-initiated activities and plenty of outdoor learning opportunities. The school is aware of the need to find more ways to motivate boys in particular, and to develop further opportunities for writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that teaching is precisely matched to pupils' differing learning needs.
- Use the information about pupils' achievement more effectively, to ensure that they all make consistently good or better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's results in the Year 6 national tests have been above average for the last five years in English, mathematics and science. The school's most recent Year 6 assessments reflect a similar picture. The Year 2 test results improved in 2007 on the previous year and were slightly above the national averages for reading and writing and slightly below for mathematics. This year's Year 2 test results are broadly similar to 2007. Pupils make good gains overall, although progress is steady during Key Stage 1 and increases through Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, collaborate well in lessons, and work hard to do their best. They are courteous, respectful and play harmoniously together at break times. Pupils are confident, thoughtful and articulate in expressing their views and feelings. The many opportunities for discussion in class help them to reflect in a mature way, illustrated by an older pupil who commented, 'This country is quite a free country and if people want to believe in a faith they can, but some people get bullied because of their faith.' Pupils make a good contribution to school life through their various responsibilities and many activities in school and the local community, and also through the way they show consideration and care for each other during the school day. Pupils say there is no bullying and feel safe in the knowledge that issues would be dealt with swiftly should they occur. They learn good strategies for their personal safety, health and well-being through the personal, social and health education curriculum and through assemblies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. It is at least satisfactory and sometimes it is outstanding. Lessons are generally lively, engaging and provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to develop their ideas through speaking and listening. Most teachers have high expectations and learning moves forward at a good pace as pupils are clear about what they are learning and why. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions and work productively. Consistent approaches to teaching literacy and sharply focused, small group sessions in Years 3 to 6 are proving beneficial in raising writing standards. Teaching assistants are effective in their roles, particularly in their sensitive support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some lessons are less productive as teaching is not so carefully matched to pupils' individual learning needs and the purpose of the activity is less clear. Although generally positive and constructive, the approach to marking and feedback is variable. It is particularly effective for older pupils where it provides clear, specific, detailed guidance on exactly how they should improve their work, and time for pupils to act on the advice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers plan the curriculum carefully to make learning meaningful and enjoyable. This often involves linking subjects together within topics to provide a context for learning. Provision for information and communication technology, music, art and French is outstanding. The wide range of other activities including special events, trips and visitors to school is excellent and particularly enjoyed by the pupils. The extensive range of clubs is always oversubscribed. There is an effective range of provision for pupils who need additional support for their learning. The role of subject leaders is being developed by the school as some areas of responsibility are due to change at the end of the school year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

High quality relationships, strong teamwork, and commitment by the staff to ensuring the best possible care for all pupils underpin the work of the school and promote an inclusive ethos. Governors play their part effectively in ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils by ensuring all the required policies and procedures are fully in place, including child protection. Arrangements for pupils joining or leaving the school ensure as smooth a transition as possible and provision is swiftly made for pupils requiring additional support for their learning. Care and specialist support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are of the highest quality and draw effectively on the expertise of a wide range of external agencies. One parent's view is commonly held, 'The unit for special needs based children is exceptionally good, caring and well led.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and leadership team provide clear direction for the school's improvement. Roles and responsibilities are clear and leaders have a positive impact in their respective areas. The governing body is well organised and fulfils its statutory duties efficiently. Governors are actively involved in school life and are playing an increasingly effective part in moving the school forward. The school sets challenging targets for academic performance and has good systems for keeping a close check on the progress of individual pupils. The school recognises the need to analyse its data on school performance more deeply to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westlea Primary School, Swindon, SN5 7BT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we came to inspect it recently. We enjoyed watching your lessons, looking at your work, talking to your teachers and chatting to you. Hearing your views was very helpful to us. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Yours is a good school. It is a calm, happy and caring community. The relationships and the way you are all looked after are outstanding. We were particularly impressed with your excellent behaviour and the mature way you express your views and consider others' feelings. The good teaching helps you to achieve well. You really enjoy school, particularly all the creative and physical activities, the trips and visitors which help to make your learning practical and fun.

The people in charge are doing a good job. They keep a careful watch on how well you are doing. The writing workshops are a good example of how different things are organised to help improve your progress. The Reception classes get children off to a good start and your standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time you transfer to secondary school.

Although your school is doing well and some of the teaching is excellent, some of the lessons are less effective at helping you to make good progress. We have asked your school to concentrate on the following two things to improve this.

- Make sure that all the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, to improve the achievement of pupils in those classes more quickly.
- Make better use of the information about standards in English and mathematics to ensure that all pupils across the school make good or better progress.

You can help too by following the good advice your teachers give you and by asking when you are not sure what to do to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold Lead inspector

19 June 2008

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Jill Arnold
Lead inspector