

Westdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122534
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380487
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Yates
Headteacher	Victoria Hayles
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 20 lessons led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, arrangements for safeguarding and minutes from meetings of the governing body, as well as other documents. They scrutinised 90 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Can the school sustain the improvements made to outcomes in English in 2011 and what improvements have been made to the teaching of writing since the previous inspection?
- Are the pupils always made aware of exactly how to improve their work?
- How do governors and middle leaders contribute to self-evaluation?

Information about the school

The school is of average size. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/ or disability is average and no pupils have a statement of special educational need. However a small number of pupils have particularly complex needs. There has recently been some staff absence and changes in the senior leadership team. The school has Healthy Schools and International Schools status

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

3

Main findings

Westdale Junior School is a good school. Pupils take pride in their school. They feel safe and are confident to talk to staff about their concerns. Behaviour is good, both in classes and around the school, and pupils attend school regularly.

Although generally good, there are minor variations in the quality of teaching. Pupils are sometimes all set the same work. This can hold back the progress of more-able pupils because they are not being challenged sufficiently. The quality of marking and guidance varies. Consequently, some pupils do not always get the very best advice about how to improve their work. Nevertheless, most pupils make good progress particularly in upper Key Stage 2 and attainment is usually above average by the end of Year 6. Although progress is improving the school is aware that there is still more to do to ensure that progress is always consistent. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of support for this group but it is too soon to measure the full impact of improvements on progress. Staff are not always proficient in the teaching of letter sounds to those pupils who need extra support in reading and writing.

The school has extensive data about pupils' progress but the information is not always used as well as it might be to regularly check the progress of pupils. Middle managers and governors are improving their skills. The literacy management group have been particularly successful in improving pupils' progress in writing. Their work has contributed to the good curriculum where valuable links are made between subjects and this ensures that there is a clear purpose for writing. Currently subject leaders have insufficient opportunities to directly observe lessons. Consequently they cannot be entirely sure if the initiatives they have introduced are consistently applied by teachers.

Good leadership and management have kept the school on track during a very difficult period. The school sustained its good provision but was unable to develop some areas of its provision as quickly as it hoped because the absence of key staff. Therefore its capacity to improve further is satisfactory rather than good. Staffing issues have now been resolved and the school is now recovering its momentum and is starting to develop at a faster rate. Self-evaluation is effective and governors and staff understand the schools overarching strengths and weaknesses, sharing the determination of the head and senior leaders to secure the very best quality of education for all the pupils in the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Address inconstancies in rates of progress by
 - ensuring that work is consistently well matched to the needs of all pupils and always contains sufficient challenge for the most able
 - making certain that marking and the use of targets consistently informs pupils about how to improve their work
 - ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils
 - make sure that staff know exactly how to use phonics to support pupils' progress in reading and writing.

- Accelerate the rate of school improvement by
 - developing the skills of middle leaders through involving them more in the monitoring of lessons
 - using data more effectively to measure the progress pupils make in each year group.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When children join Year 3 their attainment is usually broadly average although it is rising. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is often above average with an above-average proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. The school has successfully addressed a dip in outcomes in English. A strong focus on developing pupils' writing including a focus on composition and effect has addressed the gap between outcomes in reading and writing. Links between subjects have enthused pupils and they are keen to write for a purpose. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils understood exactly why certain geographical features would encourage Anglo Saxon people to choose a certain site to establish villages and towns. They were able to document these factors and make important links in their writing. The content of pupils' writing strengthens year on year and by the time pupils are in Year 6 their writing is accurate, well structured and contains a good range of vocabulary. Although pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress their progress is slower than that made by other pupils, including those who are known to be entitled to free school meals and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Skilled learning support assistants are able to successfully reshape teachers' explanations and make certain that those pupils who find learning hard are able to understand the concepts that are being taught in lessons. When these pupils are taught reading and writing as part of small groups staff are not always as skilled at segmenting and blending words and are not always entirely accurate when referring to letter sounds.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning makes a very important contribution to their good achievement. They work hard in lessons and show a determination to succeed. Their behaviour in lessons is good and there is calm atmosphere in school. Most pupils get

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on very well but the school has sometimes struggled to resolve long standing tensions between a very small number of individuals. The majority of pupils have strong moral view points and they clearly understand right and wrong. This was successfully explored in lessons about rationing in the Second World War. Although pupils have a strong sense of their own culture, they are less knowledgeable about other cultures because they have relatively few opportunities to meet others from backgrounds that are different from their own. Pupils are very willing to contribute to the school and local communities. This includes pupils belonging to the school council, supporting other pupils and raising money for charities. Pupils understand the need to take regular exercise and to eat healthily. Pupils' good basic skills, together with above average attendance and their self-assurance mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	3
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	3
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share well with pupils. They often use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and develop their leaning as well as to check pupils' understanding. Lessons are often well organised and learning is broken up into manageable pieces. When pupils are working independently many teachers are skilled at gathering pupils together and offering additional advice and guidance that boosts learning. Occasionally, pupils of different ability are set the same work. This occurs sporadically in lesson introductions and when pupils are working independently. In particular, more able pupils are sometimes set very similar work to pupils of average ability and this limits their progress. There are a number of

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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examples of diligent marking, which gives pupils clear indications about how to improve their work, but some marking is merely congratulatory. The school has introduced the use of success criteria which are shared with pupils, although academic targets are underused as a means of making certain that pupils understand the next steps in learning.

There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. Many interesting and valuable links are made between subjects. History, geography and science are all regularly used as subjects for writing. As a result, pupils learn to produce good quality factual writing as well imaginative writing. Information communication technology is used well to support learning and pupils' skills are also developed well. Pupils also produce a good variety of high quality art work. There is a wide range of enrichment activities and many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. A good range of visits brings learning to life and visits are used well to stimulate writing. The wide selection of clubs that range from Ukulele Club to Gardening Club is appreciated by pupils.

The school provides a very welcoming environment. The well-developed induction system that includes older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils ensures that pupils settle quickly into Year 3. Until recently there have been issues with the organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Systems for identifying pupils who may struggle with learning and the range of special teaching programmes that are available for these pupils have been improved. However it is too early to see the full impact of these changes on pupils' progress. The teaching assistants who support pupils with the most multi-faceted needs have particularly supportive relationships with them. However, the school acknowledges that it sometimes struggles to meet the needs of those with the most complex requirements.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have ambition and drive. The head is well aware of exactly where improvements need to be made. This is because of the good links that are made between the quality of teaching and learning outcomes for pupils during the regular monitoring of lessons by the headteacher. However subject leaders are not as involved in directly monitoring teaching. The school has plentiful data and some, like the analysis on pupils' answers on mathematics test papers, is used well to secure

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improvements to outcomes. Nonetheless the current focus on measuring progress from when pupils joined the school until their current stage in education rather than within each year group means that the school has limited information about progress made by each class in a school year. Consequently it is difficult to link pupils' progress with the quality of teaching they have received. This makes it harder to identify specific areas for improvement for individual teachers. Nevertheless they have continued to develop their teaching and school provision through valuable partnerships with the local authority and other local schools

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body provides the school with useful support as well as ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The governors are provided with information about pupils' attainment and progress but weaknesses within this information restrict the governors' ability to challenge the school. Although pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities are still making slower progress than other pupils the school has put structures in place that are designed to improve their progress. Therefore, the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity is satisfactory. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Records of incidents and of the school's support for potentially vulnerable pupils are kept. However these records sometimes lack rigour and do not record in sufficient detail the actions that have been taken or the way the impact of those actions has been monitored. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Good links with its neighbouring community are exemplified by the way the pupils have been involved in local musical events. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to meet those from different backgrounds from their own and international links are only just developing.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

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There was a good response to the questionnaire and many parents and carers provided additional written comments. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of education provided by the school and are particularly appreciative of the 'buddy' system that ensures their children settle quickly into Year 3. A number of parents would appreciate more information about their children's progress. While parents get an adequate amount of information the school is aware that more could be done to involve parents in their children's learning. Many parents feel their concerns are taken seriously by staff but a small number of parents believe that the school has been relatively slow to address allegations of bullying. The school does take these allegations seriously and inspectors found that it takes action to try and improve relationships between pupils. However record keeping and the monitoring of the impact of the school's strategies are not as robust as they might be.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westdale 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	58	38	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	60	34	38	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	33	56	62	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	33	56	62	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	41	51	57	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	32	51	57	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	40	53	59	0	0	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)	38	42	45	50	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	42	46	51	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	29	51	57	6	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	33	51	57	2	2	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	48	41	46	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	49	54	38	42	2	2	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westdale Junior School, Nottingham, NG3 6ET

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. All of the team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. It's clear that you have a wonderful time during your residential visits and learn a lot about other subjects such as geography and history as well practising your skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Your standards of attainment are above average. We were very impressed by your writing and really enjoyed reading about rationing in the Second World War and your recent trip to Caythorpe. Although your progress is good overall it can be a little uneven. We have asked your teachers to improve this by making certain that you are not all set the same work in lessons and making sure that marking always tells exactly how to improve your work. We also noticed that some of you who find learning hard are making slower progress than others. The school has improved the way it provides for these pupils but we have asked staff to improve their knowledge of the exact sounds letters make so that they can help these pupils even more.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job. We have asked the school leaders to make sure they have enough information about the progress you make in each school year and to make certain that other managers in the school have the opportunity to watch lessons.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to try very hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector

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