



Westbrooke School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101488
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 286079
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Charlesworth

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

Type of school	Special	School address	South Gypsy Road
School category	Community		Welling
Age range of pupils	5-11		DA16 1JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8304 1320
Number on roll (school)	31	Fax number	020 8304 6525
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Pat Wade
		Headteacher	Mrs Carol Hance
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Westbrooke is a small special school which caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. An increasing number are admitted with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum disorder. The great majority of pupils are White British, and nearly half come from single parent families. Only three pupils are girls. There are three pupils in Key Stage 1, with the remainder in Key Stage 2. About one third of pupils have additional learning or language difficulties identified in their statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is below average. Proposals to close the school have been put forward for consultation by the Local Authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Westbrooke is a good school. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are outstanding, and promoting pupils' personal development and well-being is at the centre of the school's work. Pupils become equipped to learn more effectively than they have been able to do previously because they feel safe and secure. The school works well with other agencies and parents to support pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive because of the help the school gives them and the difference it makes to their children. One parent said, 'One of the biggest strengths is the contact between school and parents. My child knows that if there's a problem, I will be informed. The school has also made him realise he is a person with a point of view rather than someone to be dealt with.'

Attendance is good. Pupils are warmly welcomed in the mornings, and offered a drink, toast, and a chance to talk about any issues that might have arisen since the previous day. The pupils are then ready to work. They do so with outstanding enthusiasm and enjoyment because the teaching and curriculum are good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Although the overall standards attained are below average, some pupils reach the level expected for their age which is a great achievement for them.

The curriculum activities are well chosen to be of interest and relevance. The boys in Key Stage 1, for example, were keen to show off their topic work which was excitingly displayed in a 'virtual space environment'. Pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastically writing questions to ask Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859, industrial designer) when he (an actor) paid the school a visit that afternoon. Teaching is very sensitive to individuals' needs and moods, and the staff are adept at changing direction to help pupils stay calm and involved. Behaviour, overall, is good and behavioural difficulties are consistently addressed and decrease over time. Pupils are reflective and honest about how well they have behaved and worked when reviews take place at the end of lessons. They are motivated by the school's reward systems.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good due to the school's excellent provision in this area. A strong emphasis is placed on pupils' social and moral development which helps them learn how to manage themselves more appropriately and become better equipped to take their place in society. Every opportunity is taken to help pupils see the benefit of contributing to the school and wider community. The school also works well in guiding pupils to make healthy choices and to stay safe, however, they do not always choose the healthy and safe options.

Westbrooke's strengths lie in the personal approach taken to meet individuals' needs, the excellent relationships within school and the staff's commitment to do the very best for the pupils. The school is successful because it is small and communication between adults is very good. The leadership is at the forefront of these strengths, and leadership and management are good. However, school self-evaluation is too informal and the school lacks suitably rigorous systems for development planning. Senior managers do not take a sufficiently strategic view to focus even more keenly on helping

pupils achieve more. This means that governors, although supportive and involved in the school's work, do not yet have the tools to hold the school sufficiently to account.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop and fully implement more rigorous, efficient systems to underpin self-evaluation and school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well regardless of their prime difficulty, gender or ethnic background. Due to their behavioural and emotional difficulties, pupils tend to come to the school with below average attainment and poor learning skills. Westbrooke works hard to settle pupils and improve their behaviour and concentration so that they are more open to learning. As a result, pupils make up for some of their lost time and make good progress. Some pupils reach standards that are expected for their age, particularly in science and mathematics. Standards in English tend to be a little lower due to the reluctance of many pupils to write, and the nature of some pupils' difficulties which hinders the use of their imagination in speaking and writing. Pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them on their individual education plans (IEPs).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and the difficulties that they arrive with diminish as their confidence and self-esteem grow. Although there are occasional outbursts, pupils' relationships with one another are excellent. They play well together and are supportive of one another. For example, a boy in Year 6 turned to his friend in the end of lesson review and said encouragingly, 'You know, your 3s will soon all turn to 4s.' (top reward marks.)

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Their social and moral development is excellent and pupils learn to take part in and give back to the school and wider community through active participation in events such as Sport Relief Mile. Pupils know how to lead healthy lives, for example by eating the right foods and not to smoke or take drugs. Through the curriculum and everyday life of the school, pupils come to understand more about their own and other cultures and faiths. They understand more about themselves through a growing self-respect and recognition of their own and others' feelings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and pupils learn well as a result. Pupils say that staff have a good sense of humour, listen to their views, are firm but fair and make them work hard - which they like. Lessons are lively, relevant and appeal to pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils had to write first a good social behaviour 'do' poem - such as 'DO be kind' and then a poem reflecting naughty behaviour. The wry smiles on pupils' faces showed clearly how much they enjoyed this work, and how well they understood appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Some pupils are reluctant to write, and have difficulty in this area. Insufficient use is made of alternatives to handwriting, such as the interactive white board, on these occasions. Nevertheless, lessons are well planned and based upon good assessment of pupils' current skills and what they should learn next. The objectives of each lesson are shared effectively with pupils and teachers make sure that each lesson takes account of every pupil's personal learning needs and behavioural targets. Every lesson ends with a reflective review of how well pupils have achieved their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Planning is thorough, and for English and mathematics, is based securely on the National Strategies. Resources are adequate, and creative use of visits, visitors and events such as dressing up as a story character in support of National Book Week all contribute to enriching the curriculum and so to pupils' good progress. The school has appropriate plans to develop a more creative, cross-curricular, topic-based approach to planning and teaching the curriculum.

There is a strong emphasis on personal, social, moral and health education (PSHME). Whilst there is not a distinct programme of study for PSHME, topics such as staying safe are covered repeatedly over time to reinforce issues arising in school and for individuals. Aspects such as sex and drugs awareness education and healthy living are covered as part of other curriculum subjects. Furthermore, pupils' personal development is specifically addressed every day in timetabled sessions. PSHME contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This area of provision is a strength. The school fully recognises that pupils will not learn effectively unless they feel calm and secure, and so a very strong emphasis is placed on supporting pupils' well-being. The high level of staff commitment, excellent relationships, effective behaviour management and pupils' own evaluation of their behaviour and learning all contribute to this. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with current requirements. Risk assessments are completed and

child protection and the health and safety of pupils are well attended to. The IEPs and 'modification' targets reflect pupils' personal needs and give effective guidance to pupils, parents and staff on what they should learn next.

Westbrooke works in close collaboration with parents, offers them high levels of support when needed and consults them about the school's work. Written information for parents on their children's progress and on school matters is good and parents very much appreciate the school's efforts and approachability.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are becoming well dispersed throughout the school. Staff members, including teaching assistants, have responsibilities which contribute to Westbrooke's effectiveness. The leadership team sets the positive tone and ethos of the school. However, their view of the school's strengths and weaknesses is not based on a clear analysis of information or sufficiently robust systems of monitoring and evaluation, and not all systems are consistently applied. Systematic school self-evaluation and improvement, therefore, are insecure. Managers know broadly what the school should do to improve, and it has moved forward considerably on issues identified in the last inspection. However, it has further to go. Good information is now collected on individual pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour, for example, but it is not used effectively to inform school improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The school has difficulty in recruiting parent governors, and the governing body has a number of vacancies. This, and the fact that governors do not have the information they need to check easily upon the quality of the school's work and contribute effectively to its strategic direction, limit their effectiveness. The school is aware of its weaknesses and has begun to address them through staff appointments and the school management re-structuring process. Its capacity for further development is, therefore, good.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	3
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

Thank you for letting me come into your lessons when I visited your school this week to see how it was working and how well you were all doing. I was pleased with what I found at Westbrooke, and agree with the staff that it is a good school.

I found that the staff work very hard to help you stay safe and healthy, enjoy your work and prepare you for your next schools. Teaching is good and staff give you a very interesting range of things to do, like meeting 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel'. I can see that you are learning how to manage yourselves better, and that helps you to settle down and make good progress in your work - even though some of you don't like writing very much! But it's worth persevering, and you should be proud of your achievements. The school staff certainly are. I could see how much you enjoyed what you were doing, and I thought the way that you encouraged each other was great and shows what nice young people you are.

The head teacher and staff look after you and run your school well. They keep a lot of useful information on how well you are progressing and what you need to learn next, which is very helpful for you and your parents. I have suggested, though, that they use this information a bit differently so that they can get a better picture of how to improve the school and help you learn even better. That would also help the governing body do their work more easily, as they would be given better information.

In all, I think that you are fortunate to attend Westbrooke School, and I know that your parents do too. I wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth

Lead inspector