

Weston Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116112
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312180
Inspection date	26 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Hoiles
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Newtown Road Woolston Southampton SO19 9HX
Telephone number	023 8044 8962
Fax number	023 8043 7825

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the school is improving, the rate of pupils progress in reading, whether the current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards that are as high as the previous year's cohort and what are the factors that lead the school to limit its evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning to satisfactory? Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and around the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils, and an analysis of 22 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to contradict the school's own judgements given in its self-evaluation and these have been included in the report where appropriate.

Description of the school

Weston Park is an average sized infant school. It serves an estate on the outskirts of the centre of Southampton. The school shares a large site with the attached junior school and a nursery facility through Sure Start Weston. Sure Start also provides funding for a community room that is in the infant school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. The school holds the following awards: Investors in People, Enhanced Healthy Schools, Sports Activemark and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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. It prepares its pupils well for junior education. The headteacher and staff are determined to ensure that their school provides the best for all its pupils. The resulting outstanding care, guidance and support provides the basis for pupils to achieve well both academically and in their personal development. It is central to all the school does. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure, and thoroughly enjoy school and learning. The resolute and systematic effort to improve attendance has resulted in a big improvement since the previous inspection to the current average levels. Parents are rightly supportive of the school. Typical of the views expressed was, 'The school is a warm and welcoming place and the staff are always finding fun and interesting ways for the children to learn.'

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding and pivotal to the school's success. She ensures that her deep commitment to continuous school improvement, providing equal opportunity for all pupils to achieve and her passionate belief that the pupils can, and will, succeed, is central to the school's vision. She is supported exceptionally well by the effective deputy headteacher and senior staff, and has developed a close team of staff that share her vision and commitment. Although the school's evaluations of its own provision and performance are modest, particularly in the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, the procedures for self-evaluation are exceptionally thorough. They result in high quality improvement plans that lead to a strengthening of provision and achievement. For example, the school has carried out extensive evaluations of pupils' progress in reading. As a result, they rightly determined that the pupils' skills in reading individual words were weak. Changes were introduced to quicken progress. Parents were supported to help their children to read at home by staff providing reading workshops and by introducing a 'reading log' that parents complete. In addition, changes were made in the way that letters and sounds are taught. The impact of these changes has been positive, and progress has improved considerably for the current Year 1 and 2 pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed to the school and support it well. However, their role in shaping the educational direction of the school is underdeveloped as they are not proactive in suggesting ways to move forward.

The curriculum is good. It offers pupils a broad range of interesting activities and there is a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school. The move to make the curriculum and learning more personalised to meet each pupils' needs is paying dividends and results in pupils being enthusiastic learners. The pupils' understanding of health issues and how to keep safe is good and is supported well through the curriculum, although their knowledge of healthy diet is not always reflected in their lunchboxes.

Despite making good progress in the Foundation Stage, only about half the pupils attain the expected goals when they enter Year 1. Because the provision is good, all groups of pupils progress well. In consequence, current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards that are at the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. These levels of attainment mark good achievement and a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when standards were significantly below average. Pupils say they enjoy learning because their teachers 'Make our lessons exciting and interesting'. This is helped by the excellent use that is made of the high quality tracking of progress. Teachers ensure that pupils know what their targets are and what they have to do to meet them. There are some outstanding features to the teaching though there are also occasional lessons that are satisfactory. In these, teachers do not make sufficiently good use of assessments to adjust their teaching during

lessons. This slows learning. However, there are a number of strengths in the teaching. Teachers plan lessons well. The school's commitment to ensuring that work is matched to pupils learning needs and to commence, as far as possible, with practical experiences is met well. Staff invariably ensure that there is a very positive atmosphere for learning. Relationships are good and the teaching support staff are particularly effective. The teaching assistants that support vulnerable pupils, particularly those that find learning hard or have behavioural needs, ensure these pupils' progress is good. There are also specialist teaching assistants. These include two who support pupils' information and communication technology learning and another who works with pupils that are particularly able or gifted.

Pupils' personal development is good. Although many pupils are timid and unsure of themselves on entry to the Reception classes, their confidence and self-esteem is developed exceptionally well because the ethos of support pervading the school enables all to thrive. Pupils' behaviour is good and this, when linked to their positive attitudes, makes a good contribution to achievement. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as being members of the influential school council, and leading charitable events. In addition, the high quality personal, social and health curriculum results in pupils taking responsibility for aspects of their own learning, for decision-making and for environmental improvements. Pupils designed the play equipment, which was being installed on the day of the inspection. Another contributory feature to the pupils' feeling of security is the way that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are meticulously organised. These ensure that pupils are protected exceptionally well and their health and safety are assured.

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection and its track record indicates a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although the full range of ability is represented in the intake of children into the Reception classes, overall their skills are exceptionally weak particularly in their social, personal and literacy skills. Because the provision is good, children make good progress and achieve well. There have been substantial changes in the way the curriculum and learning spaces have been organised in the past year. These factors slowed progress for a short time until staff became more accustomed to the new arrangements in the autumn term. However, the quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is now good, children enjoy the activities, and they learn and work well together. The curriculum is now very good and consists of an appropriate balance between activities that are directed by the teachers and those that the children choose for themselves. Children benefit from a wide range of good quality resources, both inside and outdoors. There are good arrangements for checking progress, and assessments are used well to guide staff in planning the next range of activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the role of governors to enable them to question and query the work of the school as well as they support it.
- Ensure that all teachers make good use of their assessments of pupils' learning, so that all pupils make the best progress possible.

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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
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	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

03 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Park Infant School, Southampton, SO19 9HX

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I visited you recently. It was a pleasure to talk with you and I particularly enjoyed watching the way you worked and played together. I would like to say a special thanks to the school council, who told me what it is like to be a pupil at Weston Park.

I can understand why you all thoroughly enjoy learning and are proud of your school. Yours is a good school. You told me that you feel really safe and I can see that this is because the staff take excellent care of you. The adults work hard for you and the teaching is good. Your behaviour is good and you take care to make sure that all pupils enjoy school. This helps everyone to feel important. Your teachers also make sure that there are many interesting activities for you to do. I was impressed with your levels of concentration and your good learning in lessons. As a result you achieve well and reach average standards by the time you leave to go to the juniors. Your progress overall is good.

I have asked for two things to be done to make your school even better. First, for your governors to help your headteacher and staff to make decisions about how the school operates. Second, I have asked your teachers to make sure that when they ask you about how well you are doing in lessons, they use your answers to adapt your work, so that you continue to make good progress.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector