

Westfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112674
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325658
Inspection date	27 April 2009
Reporting inspector	John Brennan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	195
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Barton
Headteacher	Mrs Paula Kingdon
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Vincent Crescent Storrs Road Chesterfield Derbyshire S40 3NW
Telephone number	01246 566124
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of provision upon boys' writing and the extent to which provision helps all pupils to develop independence in learning
- the impact of leaders newly in post
- the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. A significant majority of pupils are White British, with small numbers of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Typically, children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities above those expected for their age although they are occasionally lower than this.

The school has received a number of awards in recognition of its work. It is a Health Promoting school and has achieved the Basic skills, Activemark, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Eco awards. It also has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parental support for the school is overwhelmingly positive. Comments such as, 'This is a fantastic school,' are typical of the many received from parents that expressed pleasure and appreciation of the excellent quality of education their children receive.

This is an ambitious school that puts pupils' needs at the heart of all it does. Achievement is high. Against a backdrop of significant staff change, high levels of performance noted in the last inspection have been maintained and some key improvements implemented. Leadership and management are outstanding. The almost tangible sense of team work and meticulous organisation have allowed for the seamless integration of new staff. Stemming from the calm, perceptive and excellent leadership of the headteacher there is a powerful sense of common purpose. Morale is extremely high, all adults are mutually supportive of each other's efforts, embrace new ideas and help each other to do their best for pupils. The relatively newly appointed deputy headteacher has already made significant impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. She leads the way when it comes to coaching staff in new practices, such as those involving pupils in their own learning. The school is outward looking and is highly effective at involving all parents and the local community as well as engaging in many other successful partnerships that enhance the quality of provision. However, a striking feature is the amount of school-based training, for example, in the use of speech and drama to promote writing. There is depth in leadership, including that of the governing body, who are extremely effective in both supporting the school and in asking questions of it. Management systems provide rigorous tools for leaders in carrying out their work. The tracking of pupil progress and use of assessment are first rate and used extremely well in everyday lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning is sensitive, building consensus and helping staff to assess their own performance. Development planning is detailed. Pertinent issues are pursued to ensure that, despite high performance, the school continues to push forward. The school therefore has excellent capacity to improve further.

Pupils' outstanding personal development reflects their obvious enjoyment of school. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure within the school's friendly and welcoming environment. All staff work hard to make the school a happy place to be where pupils are given a very wide range of opportunities for learning and fun. Attendance rates are good. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show maturity beyond their years. They have an excellent awareness of how to live a healthy and active life, with initiatives such as 'Fruity Fridays' gently encouraging them to snack on healthy options. Pupils readily take responsibility for helping each other and through their 'Task Group' have an influential voice in shaping school development. The highly influential Eco-committee ensures that pupils understand and take seriously their responsibilities for the wider environment. Pupils know what is needed to make their work better and try hard to achieve this. They have an ability to reflect and be self-critical. Not only does this stand them in excellent stead for the next stages of their education and their future lives, it indicates their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' enthusiasm for school contributes significantly to their rapid progress and the very high standards reached. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally high and have been so for a number of years. Pupils with learning difficulties, and/or other disabilities and those with an identified specific need achieve as well as others, because of the very effective support that they receive. An impressive number of pupils go beyond expected standards.

Efforts to boost the proportion of pupils, boys particularly, reaching higher levels in writing have been successful. Pupils write with a sense of purpose and carefully construct their ideas. The impact of a recent focus on speaking and listening was seen in the articulate way in which pupils talked about their learning and expressed their views.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is very thorough and helps pupils to make the most of their time at school. They benefit from a very wide and interesting range of clubs. Themed weeks such as 'India' are highly successful in broadening pupils' horizons, strengthening an awareness of their position in a global society and helping them develop a deep understanding and respect for cultural differences. Training for teachers in the use of ICT has helped to tackle a key weakness of the last inspection. Good use is made of computers and other technology equipment available in a variety of lessons. Topics such as 'Pirates', which appeal to all pupils, and particularly boys, allow for learning to weave across subjects. A visit from a 'real' pirate typifies the school's approach to using trips, visitors and events to stimulate learning. Following the pirate's visit pupils wrote pirate stories, devised 'wanted' posters, investigated mathematical coordinates by making treasure maps, explored a treasure island using a programmable toy and enjoyed many other purposeful tasks. The school uses such activities to make learning fun and help pupils to apply knowledge creatively. Space is tight, especially outside of classrooms. Efforts to help pupils carry out research for themselves are limited by a library that is geographically remote, too small and not fully equipped for personal study. As a result, pupils' personal research skills are not as well practised as other areas of their learning and the curriculum, although outstanding in some regards, is good overall.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers aim high and have the expertise necessary to help pupils to achieve challenging goals. Stemming from a detailed knowledge of the needs of individual pupils, planning is thorough and work is pitched at just the right level for individuals. Not only do teachers know exactly what it is they want pupils to learn, they help pupils to understand this themselves. Before putting pencil to paper thinking time is used to very good effect to help pupils reflect upon what success for them will look like. As a result, pupils work in a thoughtful, organised and clear-headed manner. In many lessons they are also helped by the successful use of speech and drama to clarify thinking, as seen when pupils acted out and explained their emotions before writing. It is not only teachers who mark work, pupils themselves habitually appraise their own work and that of others against key learning objectives. All of this helps pupils to become equal partners in working purposefully towards success. Skillful teaching assistants, particularly in classes with more than one year group, complete this sense of team and contribute well at all points during lessons.

The high quality of the academic guidance given to pupils forms one facet of the school's outstanding care, support and guidance. Pupils are excellently cared for with rigorous procedures in place to keep them safe. Pupils feel they can talk to adults and that they will receive a sensitive and positive response from them. Each class has their own mid-day supervisor who responds very well to pupils' needs. Very clear systems are in place to track pupils' progress and to ensure that both pastorally and academically the needs of the individual are fully considered.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's education gets off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are extremely well supported in their learning with a programme of activities both indoors and out which meets their needs very well. They make excellent progress as a result and reach standards

that are well beyond the norm. This is especially the case regarding their skills in communication, language and literacy, in writing independently and also in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. For example, the children could make good suggestions of ways to calculate a large group of objects quickly by counting in tens or fives. The children's behaviour is excellent; they are mature for their age. They ably take on responsibility and treat each other with respect. Being independent is promoted very well, for instance, the children are encouraged to be helpful by politely handing out their classmates' books, having read the names correctly. Children's welfare and well-being are of paramount importance, the staff are sensitive to the children's needs and supportive if there are any anxieties. The children also receive high quality support in their learning and staff strive very successfully to engage and motivate the children, helping them to develop their vocabulary and ideas. The provision is excellently led and managed. The relatively new leader has clarified assessment processes so that each child's needs are accurately determined and fully met. She has a very clear view of what needs to be done next to enhance the learning environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve facilities for, and pupils' ability to carry out, personal research for themselves.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Westfield Infant School, Chesterfield, S40 3NW

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. It felt like we were visiting one big happy family. I would like to share with you what we found out about your school.

You go to an outstanding school. The headteacher and other leaders have lots of very good ideas and think very carefully about your needs. They form an excellent team. As a result the school does a first-rate job in helping you learn to read, write and count and ensures that you do so while having fun and doing lots of other interesting activities. Everyone in your school pulls together. All the staff do their best for you and you play your part extremely well in making this the best school it can be.

We were impressed with the level of work you were doing, by your keen sense of purpose and by how well you were able to talk to us about how you could make your work better still. We could see how well you got on with each other and the very responsible way in which you look after your friends, your school and the environment.

We saw your enthusiasm for learning and your grown-up attitude about doing your best. Your teachers and other adults in school are very good at making learning interesting. This is helped by the many trips you go on, by visitors to school and the interesting topics you study. However, we did feel and you also told us that it was not always easy to use the library to find things out yourselves. We have asked the school to try to find ways to overcome this so that you get more practice in doing research for yourselves. We know you have the maturity and ability to do this very well.

Once again thank you and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector