

# Westlands Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115027
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357677
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	342
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Keen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Bennison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Beeches Close Chelmsford CM1 2SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 251700
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@westlands.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by 3 additional inspectors. Twenty lessons or part lessons were observed. The team observed 14 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, senior leaders and other staff, parents and carers, and pupils. They scrutinised the school's work, and looked at policies and planning, assessment data and records, and examples of pupils' work. Eighty-nine questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The work the school is doing to raise standards in writing.
- The impact of improvements made to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The impact of changes made to subject leadership.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White British heritage. A below-average proportion of the pupils are from a range of other backgrounds and a broadly average proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Significant staff changes have occurred since the previous inspection.

There is a privately run nursery and a privately run before- and after-school club on the school site. These are inspected separately. The school has Healthy School status, a silver ECO school award and an International School Intermediate award.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved rapidly over the past two years due to more stable leadership and staffing. The governors take a more proactive role in challenging the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The senior leadership has a very strong vision for the school's future improvement and the ambition to raise standards further. The outcomes of this vision and much improved and effective subject leadership can be seen in rising standards and good learning and progress. The school has a good understanding of how well it is performing through a wide and well-organised range of performance data, which is used effectively to challenge teachers and to identify and address any underachievement. Teaching and learning are good and this is reflected in the progress made. The school provides a good curriculum but is at an early stage of developing opportunities for pupils to use their basic numeracy, literacy and information and technology skills in different ways and in different subjects. The improvements made to the positive impact of improved learning, progress, provision and leadership on standards show that the school has a good capacity to sustain this and improve even further in the near future.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for the pupils. There is excellent, well-focused provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are a wide range of interventions and strategies that help some of these pupils make outstanding progress from their often very low starting points, but these are mostly only provided for older pupils. The school also cares exceptionally well for a number of other very vulnerable pupils and uses good, effective partnerships to provide appropriate support through counselling, social groups and close liaison with other agencies. Further outstanding guidance is provided through teachers' feedback to pupils about how they can improve their work, through comments in books for example. Teachers build very effective relationships with pupils which encourage them to ask for help and guidance, rather than just wait to receive it. Strong relationships are also reflected in the outstanding behaviour demonstrated by the pupils in and out of lessons, and the ways they care for and support each other during the day.

Attainment in reading and mathematics is currently broadly in line with that found nationally, although it remains below average in writing. This represents good learning and progress from children's often very low levels of knowledge and understanding when they start at the school. The school has worked hard on raising standards in writing, with some success. Older pupils produce some quite affecting creative writing. Even so, spelling is often inaccurate and pupils have a limited vocabulary and insufficient opportunities to talk for a range of purposes and audiences.

The subject leaders have a greater role in spreading good practice and in monitoring the work in their subject. This has also been the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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where a number of important changes to provision and leadership have resulted in good progress being made and the development of an exciting and stimulating learning environment indoors. All teachers understand and use well progress data for their class. Meetings between year group teachers, senior leaders and a linked governor challenge teachers to account for pupils' achievements and ensure that progress is tracked well. Parents and carers are rightly very positive about the school. As more than one wrote, the school goes 'above and beyond' what is expected to care for their children and in some cases to support the parents and carers as well.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary through talk
  - extend the use of successful interventions in small groups or one-to-one to all year groups
  - improve pupils' spelling skills.
- Find more opportunities for pupils to use and further develop the skills they have learned in one subject in different areas of the curriculum.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

The progress observed in pupils' work and in lessons confirmed the good progress shown by the school's data. This is especially the case in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing remains weaker and is a focus for school improvement. In one excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils made outstanding progress in understanding how to systematically solve and then record the results to a complex problem. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and this promotes their engagement in learning and the good contributions they make in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good and, where there are excellent and well-focused interventions, occasionally outstanding progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of other groups of pupils although there are differences in the attainment between classes in some year groups due to the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in some classes.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy through healthy eating, engaging in physical activity and learning about the careful use of harmful substances. They make a good contribution to the community through the school council and 'ECO' group, and through a wide range of activities involving the local community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There are some very strong opportunities for cultural development through some excellent work in art and design and music. Attendance is above average and, together with the work on developing pupils' enterprise skills and independence, preparation for their future learning and lives after school is good.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The good quality of teaching and learning that is consistently in place through the school has been the result of a range of improvements made since the last inspection. The use of assessment data to plan appropriate work for pupils' abilities and capabilities is much better focused and the work observed during the inspection was appropriately challenging. Very good relationships, resulting in excellent behaviour, have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers make very effective use of new technology in their teaching. In one outstanding lesson the teacher used video as a resource to inspire and enthuse pupils to create some imaginative nonsense words. The curriculum is good and is enriched well through a range of themed days and weeks. Learning support assistants provide teachers with good-quality support. They often play a major part in the successful interventions with those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Recently an arts week was enjoyed very much by pupils and resulted in very high-quality work based on the imaginative use of work by famous artists and using a wide range of media. The school has begun to make links between subjects but this is not yet developed sufficiently so that pupils have enough opportunities to use their skills in different, more creative ways.

The outstanding care, guidance and support are evident throughout the school's work and in the positive ethos based on the school motto, 'Together everyone achieves more.' The parents and carers are aware of and appreciate how well the school supports their children, especially those most vulnerable or with emotional and learning difficulties.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership has developed a greater focus on analysing data effectively and using the improved information to raise standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are experienced and skilled, and the school benefits from their complementary skills. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the day-to-day work of the school by senior leaders, subject leaders and governors is having a positive impact in sharing good practice and ideas, and in providing support and challenge where it is most needed. The more rigorous leadership has resulted in improved quality of teaching and learning and the rising standards as well as promoting the outstanding care. Partnerships with outside agencies and other schools help with this work because the school is very open to working with others and seeking external expertise where it is needed.

Safeguarding of pupils is good because not only are all statutory requirements met but the headteacher's safeguarding expertise has led to her training others in appropriate systems and the induction and training arrangements for all staff are extremely robust. The school has recently audited its work in teaching pupils about how others live. Excellent local links are made and other links on a national level with contrasting areas are in place. A good plan is in place to extend more of this work to a wider global stage. The school's improved use of data ensures that all pupils are treated equally and provided for appropriately so they all have equality of opportunity to achieve well. For example, when a group of Bangladeshi pupils attended the school a specific project was set up to support and include them in many activities.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The good and much-improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been the result of a lot of changes and hard work over the last couple of years. This included advice from the local authority and other expertise in developing good practice. This has been so successful that provision and outcomes have improved significantly and parents and carers now describe the staff as 'the bee's knees!' Children build on their often low knowledge and understanding on joining, through a good range of activities. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, and this provides good opportunities for pupils to develop independence. A good focus on speaking and listening has had a major impact on this aspect of their learning. The start to the day is very positive and children enter the two Reception classes happily and ready to learn. A good range of activities is ready for them as they self-register and settle quickly into routines. Very good use is made of volunteer help when, for example, a parent taught a French session on numbers which was enjoyed equally by both children and staff. The assessment of children's progress is good and this informs planning the next steps in an effective way. Letters and sounds are taught to children but not often enough to reinforce these fully. The outside areas offer great potential but are yet to be fully developed as an outdoor classroom.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

A slightly smaller-than-usual proportion of questionnaires was returned by parents and carers. However, these were extremely positive, as were the views of parents and carers spoken to during the inspection. This was especially the case for the way the school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. All of the questionnaire responses said they were happy the school kept their children safe. In addition, almost all said their children were happy at school and they were happy with their child's experience at the school. The inspection findings would support these views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westlands Community Primary 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 342 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	67	28	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	66	30	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	49	40	45	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	60	34	38	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	61	32	36	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	56	37	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	58	36	40	1	1	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	43	42	48	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	52	38	43	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	39	44	49	6	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	42	50	56	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	62	32	36	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	63	32	36	1	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Westlands Community Primary School, Chelmsford, CM1 2SB**

I am writing to thank you for the way you welcomed us when we visited your school recently. I also want to thank the school council and the other children we talked to for sharing your thoughts about the school with us.

Like you, we think yours is a good school. It is getting better all the time and you are now making good progress in your learning because you have good teachers who provide you with interesting and challenging things to do. We were especially impressed with the art work many of you produced in the arts week.

One of the best things about your school is your excellent behaviour. Because of this there is a lovely atmosphere around the school, you are able to learn a lot of new things and we thought you were all very polite and friendly. The school's main strength is the outstanding way adults care for you all and help you in many different ways.

To help the school get even better we have asked the teachers to do two things.

Help you get even better at writing, speaking and spelling.

Give you more chances to use skills in different subjects by developing more links between subjects like they do on special themed days or weeks.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Westlands and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

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