

Westlands First School

Farmers Way, Westlands, Droitwich, WR9 9EQ

Inspection dates

28 February – 01 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- High levels of support and care throughout the school help pupils to learn well. Pupils have a good start in the Nursery and continue to do well until they leave in Year 4, despite a dip in achievement in Year 3.
- Overall, there is no difference between how well pupils with different needs do. The school quickly picks up those pupils who are having difficulties and gives them extra help. Such pupils in the nurture group make good progress.
- Pupils try hard because teachers make their lessons fun and interesting. Teachers ask questions to help pupils to think hard and to check they have understood. They keep a close eye on how well the pupils in their class are doing and help them to make their work it better.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because they enjoy school and want to please their teachers. Their attendance has, therefore, improved. They feel safe in school and they learn to keep themselves safe outside school.
- Leadership and management are good and there has been a marked improvement in standards since the last inspection.
- Teachers in charge of different areas of the school's help their colleagues to learn from each other and to share ideas for improving teaching and learning.
- The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and makes sure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Opportunities are missed in some lessons to match work precisely to each pupil's abilities.
- The weakest readers in Years 3 and 4 do not always sound out words and letters or make enough use of other clues to help them to read.
- The targets set for improving teachers' work are not always measurable and do not refer directly to increasing the progress of pupils. Lesson observations do not contain sufficient evidence of pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 parts of lessons taken by 12 teachers. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher and one other with a member of the senior leadership team. Additionally, 11 pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of staff, pupils, five governors and a representative of the local authority.
- There were seven responses to the on line questionnaire, and inspectors took account of responses to a recent parent questionnaire sent out by the school earlier in the term. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a number of documents, including records and documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance. Inspectors carried out a work scrutiny with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.

Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Usher-Clark	Additional Inspector
Stuart Ransom	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average and numbers have risen since the last inspection.
- Most pupils are White British and the small number of pupils whose first language is not English are fluent English speakers.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils who are in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals, or having a parent in the armed services, is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, supported by school action and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average.
- There is a higher than average proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual ones through managed moves from other schools. There are considerable differences between classes with respect to abilities and needs.
- All pupils are educated on site. Although the school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils, there is a nurture group on site that supports the most vulnerable pupils for up to five terms so that they can integrate more readily with their classmates.
- A breakfast club run by the school runs every morning.
- The headteacher spends half of the week supporting a local school that requires significant improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - match tasks precisely to individual pupil's needs in every lesson
 - reinforce pupils' reading skills, including the use of sounds and letters
 - check that pupils are using as many clues as possible to support their reading.
- Improve the leadership and management by making closer links between teaching and learning by:
 - including measurable targets for increasing the pace of progress of pupils in teachers' targets
 - focusing on under-performing pupils during lesson observations to provide evidence for judgements on their progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's ability when they start school in the Nursery is exceptionally low, particularly in literacy, when compared with children of a similar age in other schools. They make better progress than expected and their achievement at the end of Year 2 is good. The majority of pupils who have been in the school from Reception reach the standards expected of them by the end of Year 4, although progress is a little slower in Years 3 and 4. Over three years, achievement in reading, writing and mathematics shows a strong upward movement.
- Year on year, standards are improving because pupils who look as though they might fall behind are quickly spotted and given extra support. The gap between the achievement of pupils who receive support through pupil premium and others is closing. While there is approximately one average points score difference in reading and writing, there is no difference in the progress of pupils from Year 2 to Year 4 in mathematics. The school uses the extra pupil premium funding for special programmes and for extra staff to support pupils' reading and counting working one-to-one or in small groups. This enables these pupils to make good gains in their attainment in English and mathematics. The family liaison worker makes valuable links between the school and troubled families in need of support so that pupils are sufficiently supported to engage in learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. They receive good support from specialists within and beyond the school. Other adults in the classroom, including teaching assistants, ensure they make progress through good questioning and by using different tasks that are better matched to their abilities. Some pupils with social and emotional difficulties have good experiences in the nurture group that help them to develop learning skills and confidence before joining their classmates.
- Those pupils whose heritage is not White British achieve as well as others and are well integrated. A few pupils whose first language is not English achieve better than others. Pupils who are looked after by the local authority achieve well because there are good links with parents and carers and other professionals.
- Daily practice in reading, sounding out words and letters, and counting helps pupils throughout the school to learn well. Because teachers extend and develop their skills of literacy and numeracy in all lessons pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, some of these lessons do not always stretch the most able or provide enough practical activities and reinforcement for the slower learners.

The quality of teaching is good

- The strength of the teaching is in the warm, supportive and respectful relationships and firm behaviour management. All pupils are well-regarded and their individual needs are understood. Good use is made of signing in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help children to communicate. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and appealing to pupils as well as reinforcing their reading, writing, mathematics communication and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils take great delight in their learning and try very hard in all lessons.
- Teachers question pupils very well, making them think very hard about what they are learning. They sensitively explore why pupils have made mistakes and helping them to understand better. They mark pupils work well and give pupils comments about their strengths and how they can

improve. As a result, many pupils know how to make their work better.

- Teachers set work that pupils with different abilities can do. In a good Year 2 reading lesson, the teacher had planned five different activities to meet the wide range of ability in the class. The higher ability pupils were finding information about space using search engines on the computer, while the least able looked at books and used the pictures to understand the words. Others used dice in a game to make sentences more powerful. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils of different abilities worked together to design an animation on the computer to illustrate the deforestation of the Amazon. There were gasps of delight when they discovered the sound effects that could be included.
- In occasional lessons, the range of activities is insufficient to fully extend the most able and support the least able. In these lessons, opportunities are missed for more able pupils to do harder work and for slower learners to try things on their own without the teacher's help. As a result, a small number of pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers have good understanding of how well pupils are doing, because they check their work regularly. Those who are not making enough progress are given help to catch up. Other adults who help in the classroom, including teaching assistants, are well informed and work closely with pupils checking their understanding and doing different activities that help pupils to learn. Senior citizens visit to listen to pupils reading. Teachers work with parents and carers to find ways of overcoming pupils' difficulties in learning and of supporting their children's learning at home.
- Pupils are taught to sound out words and letters when reading and writing but activities are not always sufficiently well focused and reinforced, particularly for slower learners in Years 3 and 4.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good, especially in lessons and around the school and parents agree. Pupils understand the school's rules and teachers skilfully manage the behaviour of those who find it most difficult to settle into school life. Children learn to be more independent and are taught right from wrong from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - Pupils are keen to learn and their enthusiasm has been improved through changes to the learning programmes. Attendance and punctuality have improved as a result and are now broadly average. Pupils' health and wellbeing are extremely well addressed and a thriving breakfast club gives those pupils attending a good start to the day by providing a good range of interesting activities. Older pupils know how to eat healthily and how to keep themselves safe.
 - The school works very well with those pupils with a history of poor attendance when they join the school at times other than the usual ones. Bullying is unusual and any incident is dealt with promptly and firmly by staff. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and there are no exclusions.
 - Pupils benefit from good opportunities to promote their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and there is an exceptionally strong feeling of community. School assemblies involve everyone and pupils take part in singing with great gusto. Lessons in personal, social and health education, forest school, visits and visitors, and links with the community and other countries contribute well to pupils' personal development and their understanding of a multi-cultural world.
 - There are good arrangements for helping pupils to manage their strong feelings, often in
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partnership with parents. The nurture group is a centre of excellence within the local authority for its behaviour management. The school works well with some hard to reach parents supporting them and their children.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong and informed leadership from the headteacher has built a close-knit senior leadership team. The local authority has given good support and the school has used available resources well to improve children's education in this school and other local schools.
- The right priorities have been identified as a result of good evidence from keeping a close eye on how well pupils are doing and how well teachers are teaching. Good links with local schools have led to better uniformity in the judgements teachers make regarding standards, and there are good transition arrangements to the middle school.
- Teaching and learning have improved because teachers have regular opportunities to discuss their work with senior leaders in the school and set targets for better teaching. Less experienced teachers are well supported. Any areas for development are well followed-up and training is well matched to teachers' needs and the school's priorities.
- Teachers in charge of areas of the school support colleagues to learn from each other. However, the teachers' targets are not always measurable and are not well-focused on improving the progress of pupils, particularly those who are not making as much progress as they might. Lesson observations by senior leaders do not always contain sufficient information about how well different pupils are learning, especially those who are under-performing, in order to assess their progress.
- The learning programme for pupils has been successfully reviewed by teachers and changed to include topics and themes that appeal to pupils. It is extended through after school clubs, visits and visitors. As a result, pupils are better engaged in learning and standards, behaviour and attendance have improved since the previous inspection.
- The safeguarding of pupils is central to much of the school's work. There are high levels of awareness among staff and strong procedures in place. There are very good links with parents a growing number attend workshops and other events that help them to support their children at home.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well-informed and knowledgeable and has benefited from regular opportunities to train. It receives good information from the school through reports from staff and the headteachers' and staff reviews of their work. The governing body is currently trialling a way of linking teachers' performance to the pay scale. Regular governor open days give members good opportunities to question staff about standards of teaching and learning and an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. The governing body has a good understanding of the finances. Governors check how well the pupil premium is closing the gap between the achievement of vulnerable pupils and others through regular meetings to examine data. They have a clear picture of the strengths in teaching and of the support given to any teachers who are under-performing. They check trends in the achievement of different groups of pupils through data meetings. The school has good capacity to improve.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116671
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	401614

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Sutton
Headteacher	Julie Millard
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2010
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