

Westgate Academy

Westgate, Lincoln LN1 3BQ

Inspection dates	21–22 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Good leadership and management has improved the school considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders share high aspirations for pupils and are proactive in finding the right support to help pupils improve.
- Leaders use performance management systems effectively to develop teachers’ skills. This has raised the quality of teaching to the good level now seen.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning in most lessons. Good direction from class teachers ensures a quick response to strengthen pupils’ understanding and skills.
- Progress is good in all years and the majority of pupils have now reached the standards expected for their age. A high proportion of the most able pupils are working above this level.
- In 2015, Year 6 pupils’ attainment was significantly above their peers nationally in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar tests.
- Governors know the school’s strengths and weaknesses. They provide good support and ask demanding questions to make sure it keeps on improving.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Achievement gaps in school are closing rapidly because disadvantaged pupils make good and better progress.
- Pupils’ personal development and welfare are outstanding. The school provides excellent care and support for those who are most vulnerable and as a result pupils feel secure, kept safe and make good progress.
- Pupils are keen learners, behave well and enjoy coming to school. Attendance has risen to above the national average for all groups.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, pupils spend too long waiting to be given their work, and as result lose focus in class.
- In a small number of lessons, the most able pupils require clearer guidance in order to complete their tasks and activities successfully.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make outstanding progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers allocate tasks in a timely manner, so that pupils can quickly get on with their work and retain their interest and concentration in lessons
 - the most able pupils are provided with pertinent and clear explanations so they can successfully complete their work and deepen their understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders' high aspirations are communicated throughout the school and leaders at all levels show their commitment to raising the achievement of all pupils. Senior leaders have successfully raised the quality of teaching through secure performance management systems by developing the skills of all teachers.
- Leaders at all levels place a high emphasis on providing good-quality support for pupils, and the work of the support team for additional needs, 'STAN', alongside early help workers in school, underpins the good progress of some of the school's more vulnerable and challenging pupils. The family support worker is always on hand to liaise with parents and this plays a part in the excellent personal development and welfare provision for pupils.
- Changes to the structure of the senior leadership team have allowed the assistant headteachers responsible for mathematics and English to spend more time than in previous years leading their subject areas. Both leaders have been instrumental in driving improvements in teaching and, consequently, pupils' achievements.
- Staff morale is high, and staff freely express their praise and support for the changes in the school. They show a high level of loyalty and commitment to Westgate and value the school's contribution to their own professional development.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and leaders have an accurate view of the school's current priorities. Leaders routinely check and collate assessment information and share this with year teams, so that any dips are quickly identified and acted upon. This ensures that the pace of improvements remains swift. School improvement plans are realistic and accurately focused on key priorities. Plans to raise standards are linked to checks on the quality of teaching and achievement and are shared with staff at all levels.
- The school's culture embodied by the vision of 'learning and growing together' is firmly embedded into the ethos of Westgate and pupils get along with each other well. Pupils are all treated equally and accept each other's differences. Discrimination is very rare and pupils frequently show their regard and care for each other.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that school policies are followed closely. For example, teachers apply the marking policy consistently, which results in pupils correcting and improving their work.
- Communications with parents are good. Parents are included in many of the school's activities and frequently attend workshops which help them with their children's learning. The parents association makes a strong contribution to the life of the school, and many parents express their positive views through the school's own questionnaires and regular surveys.
- The new curriculum contains a good balance of English, mathematics and topic work, supported and enhanced by a strong programme of enrichment activities. Pupils particularly enjoy learning through the many stimulating trips and visits planned for each year group and the regular sports and music events. The school choir performs at a number of local events and pupils have opportunities to develop their wider creative experiences through salsa, dance and drama workshops.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Westgate is a harmonious and friendly school and pupils learn about other's faiths, beliefs and cultures through their topic and pastoral work, supported by a tailored programme of trips and visits. School values, such as respect, teamwork and positivity, are highly visible and reflect British values, which pupils know and celebrate.
- The school accesses a good range of expertise and support through the teaching school alliance partnership with 40 schools, and works closely with the main feeder infant and secondary schools. This is enhancing and developing the skills and expertise of leaders and teachers in all areas of the school and facilitates high-quality transition between schools.
- Leaders' work with the main feeder infant schools to share information about pupils is creating a more secure understanding of pupils' capabilities when they join Westgate. Partnerships with a small number of other schools are not yet as fully developed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a good, strategic view of the school's work and understand the key priorities for the school to improve further. Governors' creation of the monitoring and evaluation team has sharpened their focus on raising achievement through action points identified in the school's improvement plan.
 - Governors bring a good range of professional skills and expertise to their work and use this particularly

well to support and challenge the school in equal measure. They look closely at how performance management is used to develop staff. They have supported the headteacher in restructuring the leadership team to raise the capacity of leaders in mathematics and English.

- The impact of additional funds to boost the uptake of sport across the school is closely monitored. Governors check that the funds are being used effectively and spend time speaking with pupils and teachers to see that sports coaches are improving teachers' own confidence and skills in delivering physical education lessons. They take note of pupils' success in competitive sports and express great pride in a recent cricket tournament win.
- Governors monitor how the pupil premium funds are allocated to make sure that they are used to effectively reduce the learning gaps for disadvantaged pupils. They receive regular reports on the impact of the green room, the school's base to nurture and support pupils, and attend pupils' progress meetings to hear how pupils are making swifter progress as they move up through the school. Governors are in the process of developing their understanding of new assessment systems and await national results so that they can effectively make wider comparisons of pupils' achievements and ask more specific questions of school leaders.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors have excellent partnerships with external agencies to ensure that the highest standards of care are in place for all pupils. The 'STAN' team plays an important role in getting to know the families of pupils who are vulnerable and those who have additional needs. The nurturing environment of the green room provides breakfast for individual pupils and a calm and safe place to start the day. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. The designated safeguarding lead makes rigorous checks on all safeguarding practices. Governors and staff know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and ensure that the school's safeguarding team is highly visible and known to all staff. This means that staff have all of the information and guidance they need to provide highly effective support for pupils in their care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- School leaders have placed a high priority on raising the quality of teaching and learning and used performance management effectively to develop teachers' skills. As a result, teaching has improved and is now typically good in the majority of classes.
- Teachers across the school express their high expectations and set a good variety of suitably challenging tasks for their pupils. Pupils understand which group they are in and select the correctly pitched, bronze, silver or gold activity. They are keen to work through the 'tricky' tasks and aspire to reach the trickiest available to stretch themselves even further. On occasion, pupils are not given their work at an appropriate point for them and they struggle to retain their focus and concentration.
- Teachers form close-knit partnerships with their class teaching assistants and provide good direction from lesson to lesson. The mathematics 'purple intervention book' provides an excellent means of communication between teachers and support staff. Teaching assistants use this to skilfully target their support and frequently deliver intervention for specific pupils and groups before the next lesson begins. The high-quality and swift action of this work has contributed to pupils' good achievements in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to pupils' improved learning and accelerated progress. They know pupils well and understand their needs, providing the right balance of support at the right time. As a result, they help to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress.
- Mathematics is well taught and teachers pay close attention to the correct use of mathematics vocabulary and to developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. In a typical Year 6 lesson, pupils used their knowledge of the formula for the circumference of a circle to solve a crime problem. They were given four different wheel imprints and told that the getaway vehicle had a wheel diameter which was less than a specified size. They discussed their thoughts with partners and rearranged the formula to successfully calculate and compare diameters. This shows good application of knowledge and skills.
- Teachers provide many opportunities to write, and carefully select texts and use strategies which interest and engage boys, as well as girls. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils watched a short film clip from a popular book, before imagining themselves as two of the characters and writing their own scripts to role play the parts.

- Pupils openly express their enjoyment of reading and regular guided reading lessons are highly successful in developing pupils' reading and comprehension skills. Adults encourage pupils to read frequently at home and in school and they quickly become fluent, expressive readers.
- Teachers and pupils adhere closely to the school's marking and assessment policy. Pupils are developing a good understanding of how to improve their work, because teachers consistently provide good quality verbal and written guidance. Pupils respond to marking comments and complete their daily 'D' (development) tasks to help themselves improve.
- The most able pupils achieve well and make good progress. Teachers direct them to 'grapple' tasks which they typically tackle with minimal adult input. On occasion, pupils' uncertainties are not noticed by teachers and they flounder without more detailed explanations. This limits their progress and slows down what can be achieved at that time.
- Pupils and parents appreciate the value of homework, which is regularly set. This ranges from weekly spelling, mathematics and reading to more lengthy topic-related projects spread across each term.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The support team for pupils with additional needs, known as the 'STAN' team, have an excellent network of well-established partnerships with external specialists. They know the pupils and their families very well and this enables them to provide bespoke help for each individual child and their family.
- The school provides excellent care and support for the pupils who are potentially more vulnerable through the green room. This is known as the place to go at any time for those seeking a more nurturing, safe environment. Pupils' successes are also rewarded through the green room, and this has become a highly valued part of life at Westgate. The special educational needs coordinator meticulously checks that every pupil receives a specially tailored balance of care and support in class and carefully monitors the impact this has on pupils' well-being. As a result, pupils grow greatly in self-confidence and achieve good outcomes in their learning.
- Adults place a high value on developing pupils' health and well-being and pupils and their families comment on how very caring staff are. Pupils themselves feel very well cared for and name several adults who they can turn to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Pupils openly express their pride at being part of Westgate and a Year 6 pupil was keen to explain how the 'STAN' team had helped with her behaviour from the time she joined in Year 3. As a result, she was very pleased to have developed her self-esteem and confidence through friendship group work. In her own words, she wanted to help others and volunteered to be a reading buddy for younger pupils joining the school. This shows how Westgate pupils use their own experiences to sensitively offer help to others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes and get along well with each other and with staff. They enjoy and value coming to school and this shows through their high attendance rates. Attendance has risen steadily and is above the national average.
- There is an orderly school environment where pupils conduct themselves well between lessons and at breaktimes. Older pupils buddy with younger ones and keep a watchful eye on them to make sure that they are happy and safe. Pupils manage their own behaviour well and the small number of pupils with more challenging behaviour are well supported by adults and offered effective time-out solutions which succeed in calming pupils down. Pupils comment on the small number of occasions when poor behaviour, such as shouting out, disrupts their concentration, but accept that it is quickly restored by supporting adults. They understand that some pupils need help to manage their outbursts.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils speak with confidence about how seriously this is taken by teachers and adults in the school. Pupils learn about the different types of bullying through assemblies, topics and pastoral work, and understand how to stay safe online. The e-safety committee, formed from pupils in each class, raises the awareness of online safety and how to prevent the misuse of technology. Pupils know what to do if they feel unsafe and refer to the e-safety reporting system available through school email.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress is good across the school and pupils achieve well in all subjects and years. Pupils' achievements in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection because leadership changes have prioritised more time for the mathematics leader to effectively fulfil the role. Consequently, attainment is rising and more pupils are working at or above the standards expected for their age.
- In 2015, the published results for Year 6 mathematics showed that more pupils than in previous years were reaching the higher Levels 5 and 6. The school has built on this success by adding daily reasoning tasks, and opportunities to apply mathematical skills to different problems. As a result, progress is escalating for all pupils and their enjoyment of mathematics is high.
- Reading remains a great success of the school and pupils speak happily about their enjoyment of reading. Regular grammar, punctuation and spelling tasks have raised pupils' skills to the good level now seen. Pupils have many opportunities to apply their literacy skills through work set in 'writing journey books', and this has lifted the quality of their writing.
- Year 3 pupils joining the school, who have been unsuccessful in the national phonics screening check, receive swift, effective intervention. They make good progress early on and soon catch up with their classmates' reading skills.
- Reliable school-assessment information and a thorough analysis of pupils' work indicate that more pupils than previously now work at higher levels and a large number of the most able pupils have reached the 'exceeding' standard in each subject. Time spent in lessons and comments from pupils about their learning indicate that there is more potential for the most able pupils to reach the 'exceeding' standard, if they are given clearer explanations of the challenging tasks set for them.
- Pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding make good progress in line with their classmates in almost all year groups. School assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils are rapidly closing the attainment gaps with their peers by the time they reach the start of Year 6, as their progress accelerates. In 2015, attainment gaps compared with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally were successfully closing in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar and the reading gap closed completely for Year 6 pupils. At the higher levels, they narrowed learning gaps in mathematics, reading and grammar tests compared with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because their needs are very well understood. As a result, a high proportion make the progress expected, to enable them to reach the appropriate level for their age by the end of the school year.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Those who need additional language support are swiftly identified and a specialist teaching assistant effectively supports the development of their reading and writing skills. In 2015, Year 6 pupils outperformed their peers nationally at the higher level in combined, mathematics, reading and writing tests.
- Aspirations are higher across the school than previously and pupils have raised their expectations of their own capabilities. Coupled with the school's good transition links with feeder secondary schools, Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	137451
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10011753

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Belcher
Headteacher	Richard Stock
Telephone number	01522 528308
Website	www.westgate.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@westgate.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 April 2014

Information about this school

- Westgate Academy is an above average-sized junior school and the number of pupils on roll has increased slightly since the last inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is close to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is slightly above average.
- Both assistant headteachers have been recognised as 'specialist leaders in education' with expertise in mathematics and English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons, seven jointly with senior leaders, and looked closely at support in and out of class for pupils who need additional help with their learning.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in class and attended one school assembly.
- The inspection team looked closely at pupils' work in every class and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of the inspection and took note of their views through the 64 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and through the school's own surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school and met with two groups of school councillors and a group of vulnerable pupils.
- Staff expressed their views by speaking with inspectors and returned 44 online questionnaires for analysis.
- The lead inspector met with a group of four governors and also spoke with the headteacher of a feeder infant school to discuss how the schools work together. Inspectors spoke with school leaders responsible for English, mathematics and assessment and for coordinating the provision for pupils with special educational needs. They looked at the work of staff who run the 'green room' and spoke with teaching assistants about their roles.
- Inspectors checked the school's documentation on attendance and behaviour and looked closely at records of assessment of pupils' progress and those relating to monitoring of safeguarding. They looked at records of governing body meetings and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Mansell	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin McHenry	Ofsted Inspector

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