

Westcott Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110442
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288675
Inspection date	25 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tina Wooller
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hickey
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	High Street Westcott Aylesbury HP18 0PH
Telephone number	01296 651360
Fax number	01296 651360

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Westcott is a very small school which serves an advantaged rural area. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage although a few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than found in most schools. There are currently three children of Nursery age in the Foundation class. The school has been recognised as a Healthy School. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils are right to be proud of Westcott because it is an outstanding school where pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school has an intimate, family atmosphere underpinned by strong Christian values. Staff know the children and their families very well and provide them with excellent care, guidance and support. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and develop as confident, enthusiastic learners. One parent, representing the views of several, commented 'I am very pleased with the level of care and educational standards of Westcott School.'

Pupils' excellent achievement is the result of outstanding teaching which makes the most of the small groups to tailor learning to the specific needs of every individual. Pupils make rapid progress and, by the time they leave, reach standards that are exceptionally high. They are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education and the world beyond. Pupils make a very positive start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of the lively and stimulating learning environment. However, the school is aware that the current Foundation accommodation does not readily allow the youngest children access to the outside area in order to explore the world around them. Plans are in place to address this issue.

The curriculum caters extremely well for the development of pupils' basic skills and the few who have difficulties or are learning English as an additional language are given very good support which enables them to achieve well. There are many opportunities for pupils to be creative and a 'hands on' approach allows them to really enjoy their education. The grounds are used extensively to support pupils' learning and their appreciation of the environment. In pride of place is the impressive 'Iron Age Roundhouse' which was constructed by pupils with professional support. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on staying healthy which contributes to pupils' outstanding understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' personal development is a high priority and helps them to be caring and considerate of one another. Pupils are also playing an important part in the church and village communities.

The new headteacher has made a very positive start. She has rapidly gained the confidence of staff, parents and pupils and is building effectively on the existing strengths of the school. She is not content for the school to rest on its laurels, however, and has identified areas where the school could improve even further. The headteacher is very well supported by a dedicated staff and governing body who work very effectively together as a team to provide high quality care and education for the pupils. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed and high standards continue to improve. This illustrates clearly that the school has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the Foundation curriculum and accommodation to allow the youngest children to explore the world around them, both inside and out.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

As numbers are so small pupils' skills and understanding when they join the school vary considerably from year to year. However, in most years they are a little above average overall. From these starting points they make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and most

meet, or exceed, the goals set for children of that age by the time they enter Year 1. The standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have risen over the past three years. In 2006 they were in the top five percent of schools nationally, with most pupils reaching the higher level in all three aspects. Pupils in the current Year 2 are on course to meet even more challenging targets this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including the social moral, spiritual and cultural dimensions is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy all aspects of school life and talk enthusiastically about making the labyrinth and roundhouse. This is confirmed by parents and one commented, 'My children love going to school and have benefited from the quiet discipline and learning environment.' As it is so small the school is like a large family and pupils take good care of one another. They are very polite and behave extremely well. They feel very safe and comfortable because 'there is always a teacher nearby' as one Year 2 child put it. Pupils talk knowledgably about the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They feel that staff listen to their worries. For example, refurbishments to the toilets were undertaken as a result of their concerns about this important part of the building! Pupils are involved with the church and village communities. For instance, they perform country dances at the Westcott Village Fun Day. They also show their awareness of the wider community through fund raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The small team of teachers and teaching assistants work flexibly together in order to meet the needs of every pupil and to challenge them to achieve as well as they can. The Reception group is taught very effectively for most of the time by a highly skilled teaching assistant. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils and high expectations of their work and behaviour. They provide interesting and challenging activities which motivate and engage pupils. This ensures that learners are enthusiastic and make exceptionally good progress. For example, in Reception, children enjoyed squeezing oranges to make drinks for their 'juice bar'. Every opportunity was taken to develop their understanding of counting, capacity and money through probing questions. The older pupils are sometimes taught as discrete year groups and as a whole class at other times. In a mathematics lesson both groups were skilfully challenged to tackle complex problems with a partner through using their existing mathematical knowledge. Staff give pupils very good oral and written feedback which enables pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. It is excellent for the development of literacy and numeracy skills and results in high standards. The recent introduction of a new literacy programme is building successfully on existing provision in order to develop these skills consistently though the school. There are many more opportunities for pupils to be creative than there were at the last in inspection. Aspects of the curriculum are linked together well through themes so that pupils are able to see the relevance of what they are learning. Visits and visitors are regular

feature of school life. Pupils enjoy singing and all Year 2 pupils also learn to play the recorder with the assistance of a specialist teacher. Provision for physical activities is also better and the school uses an outside provider for sport. There are currently no additional clubs and the headteacher is actively seeking ways of improving provision in this area. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides well for children's development in all areas of learning. Currently, the accommodation does not provide a designated outside area for the youngest children and it not possible to easily plan the free flow of activities between the classroom and outdoor areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's strong Christian values are at the heart of its work. Staff have a very close relationship with all pupils and families which ensures that every child is nurtured and any problems are quickly identified and dealt with. This is recognised by parents who hold the school in high regard. Many feel that their children benefit from the intimate family atmosphere of the school. Where necessary the school makes very good use of its links with outside agencies to help meet pupils' needs. It also works well with other small schools in the area to enhance provision, in sport for example. Academic guidance is very good. Pupils are clear that targets help them to improve their work. The new headteacher has introduced a new tracking system to follow pupils' progress as they move through the school. It is helping to ensure that any potential underachievement is identified at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The new headteacher leads by example and has brought her own distinct vision to this successful school which has been embraced by staff and governors. Staff work very closely together to maintain the high quality of care and academic achievement. They share responsibilities and expertise well and are outward looking, seeking advice and additional help to support their work where necessary. The headteacher has quickly established a realistic view of the school's many strengths and areas for improvement through a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation in her first two terms. The modesty of the self evaluation indicates the school's determination to improve still further. Staff are supported very effectively by governors who bring a range of skills and offer a good balance of challenge and support to the headteacher.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 the 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

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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westcott Church of England School, Aylesbury, HP18 0PH

You may remember that I came to visit your school recently. I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed my day at Westcott and I thought you might like to know what I found out.

You and your parents are right to be proud of the school because it is outstanding. You told me how much you enjoy school and were very proud of your Roundhouse. You all feel safe because the school is like a large family and staff look after you extremely well. You are all very polite and well behaved and try your best with your work. Well done!

Teachers give you lots of interesting things to do and help every one of you to do very well in reading, writing and mathematics. You also have many opportunities to learning other subjects. I particularly enjoyed your singing and playing of instruments in Years 1 and 2. By the time you move on to your next school you are very well prepared. Some of you told me how sad you will be to leave.

Your new headteacher has made a very good start and is working well with you and your parents. She gets lots of help from all the staff and they are determined to make things even better for you. They are keen to develop the outside part of the Foundation area and I think this will help the younger children to learn even more.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector