

Westende Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109899
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	325053
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Hawkins
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Allen
Date of previous school inspection	29 May 2006
School address	Seaford Road Wokingham RG40 2EJ
Telephone number	01189 786 682
Fax number	01189 795 567

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school in an urban area of Wokingham. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of those for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The school includes the Acorn Resource Centre, which supports pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is higher than average.

The school has a number of awards, including the National Healthy School status, the Activemark and the Eco-Schools Bronze award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where the strong leadership of the new headteacher has added significant momentum to the drive for higher standards. Marked improvements have resulted in good teaching, a curriculum that is relevant to pupils, and the best care possible for pupils. There is a tremendous sense of teamwork and pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the high quality of the pastoral care they receive.

The standards pupils reach have risen and are now above average. They are making good progress, particularly those who have considerable barriers to overcome. Although many pupils did not make as much progress as they should have done in the first years in the school, many of the weaknesses that hampered progress have been thoroughly addressed. Consequently, pupils are now achieving well. Many pupils receive good academic guidance but this is not yet consistently effective, particularly in the younger classes.

Parents hold the school in very high regard, and the great majority are fully supportive. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented that the headteacher and her team, 'do an excellent job and are always available to listen to parents and provide support, acting on any concerns parents have'. Another added, 'She has brought lots of exciting, new initiatives to the school and we're very pleased with how the school runs.' A very few parents expressed concerns that parents' views are not always considered. Inspectors considered a range of evidence and found that there are many opportunities for parents to express their views, for example through the active parents' forum, which many appreciate.

The school's positive atmosphere is generated by the teachers, who feel that they are working with 'amazing children', and the pupils, who are excited about what is next in their learning. All pupils are helped to feel included, and they are quick to support anyone who is anxious. Peer mediators and good opportunities to talk to adults mean that pupils feel very safe; they know that if there are any issues, they will be dealt with sympathetically and effectively. Pupils are highly aware of what they can do to stay healthy, and the school's own outdoor pool contributes to this, alongside the extensive range of other popular sporting activities available.

Pupils take a great deal of initiative for themselves, for example raising money for charities. They are also involved in helping to develop the curriculum, with input into the topics they study. As a result, they work with great motivation, independently and in groups. Their skills in information and communication technology and in enterprise are very well nurtured. Transition arrangements are also exemplary, so they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

The Acorn Resource Centre provides outstanding support for those on the autistic spectrum. Through excellent leadership, the unit provides very effective learning opportunities for these pupils and ensures that they develop good skills as learners, even while they are integrated in other lessons. As a result, they make particularly brisk progress. Pupils with other moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities are similarly well supported.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the academic guidance given to pupils is consistently of high quality in all year groups, so that they reach the highest standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In lessons progress has accelerated and, as a result, pupils are reaching even higher standards. Standards are now above average overall. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels in English and mathematics is above average and in science is broadly average. The good pace of teaching, good questioning and relevant curriculum all help to ensure pupils make good progress overall. This was evident during a Year 6 lesson, to develop advertisements, which was lively and engaging. Although there are more pupils in the current Year 6 who joined the school later than the usual transfer time and with learning difficulties, they have achieved well. As a result of the support they receive, particularly in the Acorn Resource Centre, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least good and often outstanding progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected by good attendance levels and their highly positive views of their school. One pupil commented, 'Westende is fun', while many others said that teachers made lessons very enjoyable. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and are quick to welcome new pupils into the school and to notice when someone needs help. They are reassured by good relationships with staff, who they say will sort out any incident of bullying, though these are rare. 'We trust the staff', commented one pupil. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of safe use of the internet. They speak enthusiastically about making healthy choices at mealtimes and eagerly participate in the wide range of sporting clubs, including street dance, tennis and tag rugby. These help to develop their exceptionally strong awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle. They undertake responsible roles through being active members of the school council and of the eco-club and acting as 'playground friends', and have contributed much to improving the quality of the school environment. They have a strong sense of community and have participated in joint musical concerts with other schools. Their knowledge of cultures other than their own is developing very well through exploration of a range of African music, the Senegalese drumming workshop, and through visits to places of worship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Almost all lessons are now good, as a result of well-focused support and a common vision to provide pupils with good learning. Increasingly accurate assessment data is used to plan lessons which ensure pupils make good progress, particularly in the upper year groups. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in lessons and develop good independent learning skills, for example by evaluating their own learning. The strong subject knowledge of teachers, and their good use of information and communication technology, including interactive whiteboards, ensure lessons are interesting and have good pace of learning. Pupils are given interesting and generally challenging tasks to do which develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Occasionally, more able pupils in the younger years are given work that is too easy because teachers underestimate what they can do. Those who need additional help are very well supported by

skilled teaching assistants, who help to ensure these pupils are able to make the most of the learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is improving rapidly. It is diverse, promotes outstanding personal development and meets statutory requirements. The recent creative revision of the curriculum allows greater opportunities for older pupils to undertake practical activities, which develop their investigative skills. The school is planning to use this approach with all year groups, which will further strengthen the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils' creative expression through art, drama and music are very strong and make a considerable contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. The highly regarded and effective Acorn Resource Centre facilitates the inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to access learning and boosts their confidence. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported. Regular music lessons help pupils learn to work as a team and to play a range of percussion instruments and sing uplifting songs. There are good cross-curricular links such as the use of good writing skills in science. The curriculum is enhanced well by the popular and wide-ranging extra-curricular clubs, by the residential trips to the Lakeside Outdoor Activity Centre, and by interesting visitors, all of which help pupils to enjoy learning and to overcome challenges.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is very strong. The school has a friendly and nurturing atmosphere. As a result, pupils are confident and know that any problems will be quickly resolved. The quality of academic guidance varies. While it is good in some classes it is not consistent. Consequently, some pupils do not get specific enough advice on how to reach the next level of their learning, particularly in the younger years. The use of success criteria is proving increasingly effective and, in the best examples, these are linked to ambitious targets. The school complies with statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe. For example, comprehensive risk assessments ensure pupils' safety during educational trips. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good levels of support that are closely tailored to their needs. Those identified as having particular gifts or talents are very well nurtured so that they tackle more advanced learning. The school liaises extremely well with external agencies, for support and specialist advice in addressing the needs of pupils who may be vulnerable or need additional help in any way, particularly through the Acorn Resource Centre, which is recognised for developing exceptional expertise and supports other schools in caring for pupils with autism.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since her arrival two years ago, the headteacher has provided the school with strong leadership and a clear vision for improving learning. She and her team have a good grasp of the current strengths and areas for development, and a passionate determination to move the school forward. As a result, well-focused strategies have been introduced to ensure that pupils' progress is carefully tracked and that teaching improves. This has had the impact of raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. The headteacher has developed a new leadership structure which ensures that other leaders and managers are an effective part of bringing about

improvements, by taking responsibility to help analyse data and implementing changes to the curriculum. They have developed some good links with wider communities, which are helping pupils gain a wider view of the world, and promote good community cohesion. Governors are well informed and provide good levels of challenge alongside their loyal support. As a result of the good leadership and support, the school provides good value for money and is very well placed to improve further.

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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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

20 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westende Junior School, Wokingham, RG40 2EJ

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you for chatting to us so confidently and making us so warmly welcome when we inspected your school. You told us that you think your school is a good school, and we agree with you.

We were very impressed by the way you behave so well, and many of you told us that you enjoy school a lot, because lessons are such fun. Your parents also feel that you are well looked after at school, because the staff take such good care of you. There are many ways in which you support each other and take on responsibilities, and this helps to make your school such a pleasant place to be. You also know how to keep healthy and stay safe and how to make a really helpful contribution to your community. This was clear from the way you played at break-times and supported each other in lessons, as well as the things you told us you do, like raising money for important charities.

Many of you have already made a good start to your learning when you join the school, and you go on to reach standards that are often better than those of pupils in other schools. Those of you who find learning more difficult do particularly well. However, we do want the school to make sure that the teachers tell you exactly what you need to do to reach the next level of your learning. You can help by trying your best to do these things.

We thought that the leaders in the school are doing a good job of making sure that you have plenty of support when you need it. As a result, we think that they will be able to help you reach even higher standards.

Most importantly of all, you should continue to enjoy learning and work hard to do the very best you can.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Saunders

Lead Inspector