

Westhaven School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109406
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	309969
Inspection dates	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–16
Number on roll	70
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Found
Headteacher	Jenny Moss
Date of previous school inspection	9–12 June 2003
School address	Ellesmere Road Uphill, Weston-super-Mare North Somerset BS23 4UT
Telephone number	01934 632171
Fax number	01934 645596

Age group	7-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Westhaven School educates boys and girls mainly experiencing moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and physical disabilities. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. There are twice as many boys as girls and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are White British. Westhaven is part of a federation comprising another special school and four mainstream community schools. It is a specialist school for business and enterprise and offers extended services in parent support. The school is applying to be a trust school linked with a mainstream community school and other partners.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents say of this outstanding school, that it is 'truly wonderful' and, 'Since being at Westhaven, my son has started meeting mainstream grades – this says for itself that this school is absolutely amazing'. In this exceptional environment, all pupils make outstanding progress. Older pupils gain a very wide range of qualifications and often reach average levels because throughout their time at school, Westhaven stretches pupils to achieve their very best.

Teaching is outstanding because teachers are enthusiastic, confident in what they teach and build excellent relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants make an invaluable contribution to the excellent ethos of the school. Lessons are very well planned, taught at a captivating pace and greatly enjoyed. The very rich and varied curriculum provides pupils with excellent opportunities for learning and development. This is greatly enriched by the school's vigorous encouragement of enterprise skills, excellently enhanced by the very wide range of links on which the school draws. Activities and lessons are skilfully fine-tuned to ensure work is pitched at just the right level for each pupil so they are able to achieve extremely well and are really challenged.

Pupils feel very safe but also develop exceptionally in independence and confidence because of the extremely effective balance of outstanding support and very high expectations that the school conveys. Pupils make excellent progress in developing economic and work-related skills because of the very wide range of opportunities they are offered and which they enthusiastically seize. They make an excellent contribution to the school community and to the wider community because they learn the importance of responsibility and caring for others. The arrangement for pupils to meet regularly in a small group with a member of staff they know very well makes an extremely important contribution to care and support. Staff know pupils and their needs very well, so procedures for protecting children are robust and the pastoral support of pupils is excellent. Attendance is good and the school is ambitious to improve attendance levels even further. However, the effectiveness of current strategies to promote attendance are not sufficiently evaluated. The school monitors the progress and development of pupils extremely well using records that are detailed and comprehensive but also manageable. These approaches create an environment in which pupils accept challenges with confidence and thrive extremely well.

The school is outstandingly well led by the headteacher, who has exceptional skills in motivating others and facilitating actions that lead to improving the provision. Very effective support is provided by dedicated senior staff and the whole staff pull together as a very strong team because everyone is very clear about the direction in which the school is going. Governors' outstanding support and vigorous challenge are helped by the strong links that exist between individual governors and particular areas of staff responsibility. Links with other agencies, companies, schools and colleges are excellent because the school places great importance on nurturing these and because they are greatly valued by both sides. The school has made excellent progress since its previous inspection and does not accept that 'good' is good

enough. Teachers and governors are constantly looking for ways to get better. The school is excellently positioned to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate strategies to promote attendance to determine their effectiveness so that they can be refined and improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

In relation to their different starting points, pupils make excellent progress. The attainment of older pupils reaches national average levels. This is because the progress they make throughout the school is outstanding. Younger pupils make exceptional progress and this momentum is carried through to older pupils, where progress is also excellent. They obtain a very wide range of examination qualifications very precisely pitched at what they can achieve. These include General Certificate of Secondary Education, National Vocational Qualifications, Business and Technology Education Council awards, and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Bronze Awards. Pupils reach very challenging targets. They make exceptional progress in developing the skills of independent learning that prepares them extremely well for further study or work when they leave school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils say, 'Teachers try their best for us'. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are polite and courteous, confident and thoughtful. They enjoy school enormously and many exhibit a keen sense of humour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they enjoy excellent relationships within the school. At break times and after lunch, pupils of all ages socialise and talk or enjoy activities together harmoniously. They have excellent attitudes to learning and try very hard at tasks, even when they find them difficult.

Pupils have a strong sense of safety and of keeping safe. They love physical education, which helps keep them fit, and they thrive in the relationships of trust that exist in the school. Pupils participate exceptionally well in decision-making and make very strong progress in working independently as well as cooperatively. Pupils respond extremely well to the extensive links with the community and other places of education and this contributes very strongly to their skills in workplace learning being excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The outstanding teaching and learning drive the excellent progress pupils make. Well-planned lessons encourage communication, self-confidence and hard work. They are enjoyable and conducted with an energetic pace. A rich vein of humour in

lessons enhances learning but never gets in the way of it. Lessons observed by inspectors were either good or outstanding. Teachers are very confident in what they teach and very well supported by teaching assistants, who make a major contribution to the excellent school and classroom ethos.

Challenging questioning helps stretch pupils. Staff know the pupils and their needs exceptionally well so that work is pitched very accurately to extend pupils' learning. In one lesson, the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher spilled over to pupils who were animatedly discussing ways of presenting the play *Macbeth*. In a science lesson, where the teacher's expectations were very high, pupils responded extremely well to this challenge. Work was very precisely matched to what the pupils could do so independence was exceptionally well encouraged. Assessment is an integral part of lessons and records are carefully made and fully used.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very rich and varied curriculum promotes learning and personal development exceptionally well. Provision for literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology is very securely embedded and links between these and other subjects are very strong. The many visits to places of interest, residential opportunities and visitors to the school are enormously appreciated and enjoyed by pupils.

Greatly enjoyed lunchtime activities include clubs for craft, computers, chess, pool and music technology. The exemplary range of examination courses carefully chosen to match each pupil's capacities and aspirations stretches pupils to do their absolute best. Business and enterprise flourish in this environment and pupils show a very strong interest in this area, speaking very confidently about business issues. Pupils receive excellent advice and support about careers and their options for the future, which helps them face the future with realistic optimism. The exceptional links with business, local colleges and schools and the community feed very strongly into the vibrant curriculum and enhance provision greatly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Within an outstanding ethos typified by excellent relationships, the school provides exemplary pastoral support and guidance. Pupils benefit enormously from the regular personal adviser time where the small groups build up very close and trusting relationships with a member of staff who knows their needs exceptionally well. The superb links with a very wide range of outside agencies enrich and strengthen this area, having a very positive impact on pupils' progress and development.

Excellent records of progress and development are detailed but manageable. The rigorous monitoring of the progress of individual pupils and groups contributes excellently to the very high expectations the school has of each pupil. Rare incidents of verbal bullying are taken very seriously and dealt with strongly. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are clear and strong and careful risk assessments are made as necessary. The school has developed a range of strategies

to promote attendance but has not yet sufficiently analysed their relative effectiveness.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership and management skills of the headteacher and her exceptional skills in motivating and facilitating others drive the school onwards and upwards. The excellent and dedicated support of senior staff and the commitment of all staff make an invaluable contribution. The direction of the school is clear to all and very clear targets are set based on a rigorous analysis of information and data, and the school then makes strenuous and successful efforts to reach them.

The school's very effective systems of self-evaluation provide a powerful motor for change and improvement. Performance management systems, in which staff performance is assessed each year and they are set targets to achieve, are very strong and linked most effectively with support and training. Governors tackle their work with great seriousness and provide exceptional support and vigorous challenge to the school. This is assisted by the clear and effective links between individual governors and particular staff for monitoring purposes. Equality of opportunity is excellently promoted by the best being expected of every pupil. Resources are managed with great skill and are deployed very effectively, giving outstanding value. Extended services to help parents support their children greatly contribute to pupils' achievement.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B



15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Westhaven School, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset
BS23 4UT**

It was delightful to meet you when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. Thank you for your help in contributing to the inspection.

You go to an outstanding school that helps you do really well in your work. You make quick progress because your teachers are excellent. The school provides you with a fantastic curriculum with many additional activities that you all enjoy. You are provided with excellent care and support by all the staff.

There is one thing the school might do better. I have asked the staff to work even harder to make sure that your attendance at school is as high as it can be. You have a big part to play in making this happen so I hope you will do your best.

Thank you again for your kindness to us when we were with you.

I wish you every success for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Farrell'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and 'F'.

(Lead inspector)