

**Westfield Primary School
West Lothian Council
22 April 2008**

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1. Background

Westfield Primary School was inspected in January 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the village of Westfield and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 21. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average. The headteacher, who had been in post for ten months, was also the headteacher of Torphichen Primary School.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The quality of pastoral care provided for all pupils.
- High quality teamwork among staff and their commitment to all pupils.
- The school's management of resources and space for learning.
- Productive partnerships with parents, carers and partner agencies.
- The leadership and commitment of the headteacher.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents and carers, pupils and staff were very pleased with the work of the school. They expressed very positive views about the significant changes made by the recently appointed headteacher. Parents thought that their children enjoyed being at school and

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

that staff showed care and concern for pupils. They felt that they were well informed about ways to help their children with their homework and that parents' evenings and school reports were helpful and informative. Pupils enjoyed being at school. They felt safe and well looked after. They said that teachers told them when they were doing something well and explained things clearly. They thought that they were treated fairly in school and the school helped them keep healthy. All staff were very positive about working in the school. They felt they worked well together and that the school was very well led. Staff felt there was effective communication between senior managers and they had good opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school provided a very broad and well balanced curriculum for all pupils. Teachers were implementing new approaches to using information and communications technology (ICT), and to promoting more active learning. They were putting a strong emphasis on using cross curricular work to help pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils in P1- P3 had written about road safety as part of their personal, social and health education programme. Pupils in P4- P7 had engaged well in role play and taken part in high quality discussion on the theme of bullying. All pupils had two hours of physical activity a week delivered through a varied and stimulating programme which consisted of games, gymnastics, swimming and aerobics. The promotion of health and wellbeing permeated the curriculum and the school ran focus weeks on health in conjunction with other cluster schools. The overall quality of teaching for effective learning was good and there were several examples of very effective lessons. Teachers were very well organised, gave clear explanations and instructions and fostered very positive relationships with pupils. They selected appropriate and motivating resources and took full account of pupils' prior learning. Teachers had made a good start to sharing with pupils the aims of classwork and how their work would be assessed. However, the pace of lessons varied and at times was too slow for some pupils. Teachers used praise well to motivate pupils. They did not always provide individual pupils with sufficiently specific feedback to make them aware of how they could improve their work. In some lessons pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to use their initiative and exercise choice in their learning.

The overall quality of learners' experiences was good. Pupils were motivated by their classwork. They worked cooperatively in teams on tasks which involved planning and problem solving. For example, they had worked in groups in drama and environmental studies to put together performances and conduct experiments and had given oral presentations as part of enterprise activities. At all stages, pupils were successfully developing research and enquiry skills through well structured and thought provoking tasks. Overall, they had made a good start to becoming independent learners. For example, P1- P3 pupils had taken on the role of archaeologists to piece together evidence about the Romans. Pupils in P4-P7 used computers competently to research the life of Robert Burns and to gather information and ideas. Most pupils made good progress in their classwork.

The school was developing pupils' wider achievements very well. Pupils exercised responsibility and developed a strong sense of citizenship through serving on the pupil council and Eco committee, regularly running enterprise events and leading school assemblies. Pupils had regular opportunities to express their views and contribute to decision making through pupil questionnaires. With help from community members, pupils had developed a garden which was used as an outdoor environmental learning space where they grew vegetables and conducted science experiments. Pupils had put together an attractive display on the rain forest in the local library. They took part with some success in sporting activities with other primaries held in the local secondary school and attended after school clubs in basketball, art and enterprise. The attractively displayed Achievements Board highlighted areas of success, both within the school and in the wider community, which pupils and staff took pride in.

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. From P3 to P7, almost all pupils were achieving national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. A few pupils who had gained levels earlier than might have been expected at the early stages had not sustained these gains into the middle and upper stages. Pupils who required further support with aspects of English language were making good progress towards agreed learning targets and received well judged support from classroom assistants. Across the school, most pupils listened attentively and successfully followed teachers' instructions. Most pupils from P4-P7 talked confidently in groups and were able to express their opinions clearly. Pupils had positive attitudes to reading and most read regularly for pleasure. At P6 and P7, pupils were able to extract information from texts and demonstrated good comprehension skills. The quality of writing across all stages was adequate. Pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to develop and reinforce their skills in writing or to write at great enough length. Teachers had started to use ICT effectively to support pupils' in reading for information and writing for a variety of purposes.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was adequate. The school had assessed almost all pupils as attaining appropriate national levels of attainment with some pupils attaining these levels early. However, not all pupils were fully secure in these levels and lacked confidence in tackling some aspects of mathematics. Teachers and support staff provided high quality support to individuals and groups with additional learning needs, working with them individually and in carefully selected groups. These pupils were making good progress. Pupils at P1 and P2 were making good progress in developing skills in number work. At all stages, although pupils were familiar with some types of graph, older pupils had little experience of using ICT for spreadsheets and databases. Pupils' skills in mental manipulation of numbers including calculations involving units of measure required further development. At the upper stages, pupils' understanding and use of fractions and decimals was not secure. Pupils were familiar with two-dimensional shape but lacked knowledge of the properties of three-dimensional shapes. At all stages, pupils lacked experience and understanding of the use of problem-solving strategies. However, the school had made a start to developing new approaches to address problem solving and numeracy. Enterprise opportunities had provided pupils with real experience in the use of money and pupils successfully carried out these calculations.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Overall, the school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs were good. Teachers provided suitable activities to build on pupils' prior learning. Teachers and support staff provided well judged support for pupils through adapting programmes and working with groups and individuals to support and reinforce learning. Occasionally, tasks in writing and aspects of mathematics were not matched closely enough to pupils' individual learning needs and in a few lessons, higher achieving pupils needed to be challenged more. Teachers effectively assessed pupils' learning needs and took appropriate early action taken to meet individual needs. The principal teacher, who had responsibility for support for learning, ran a number of successful and enjoyable activities to promote better coordination and address barriers to learning. A few pupils with additional support needs had individualised educational programmes which set clear targets for progress. The educational psychologist and local authority literacy and behaviour support teams provided a high level of support to staff and pupils. The school used effective arrangements to support pupils transferring from nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The school's arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils were very good. All pupils felt safe and secure and were confident any concerns would be listened to by school staff. Almost all pupils thought the school handled any incidents of bullying promptly and effectively. Staff were caring and committed and they knew pupils and their families well. Staff provided effective pastoral support for potentially vulnerable pupils. The school had appropriate procedures to deal with child protection issues. All staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in child protection, including Internet safety. There were suitable and well-understood procedures in place for the administration of medication. The school strongly promoted inter-agency involvement through regular review meetings and the headteacher kept detailed records of pupils' needs. The school had achieved recognition as a Health Promoting School. Pupils benefited from a breakfast club and early entry to school in the morning, where they could meet with support staff informally.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Management and use of resources and space for learning</p>	<p>The overall management and use of resources and space for learning was very good. The building was clean and well maintained and security arrangements were appropriate. Classrooms were spacious and well furnished and there were interactive whiteboards in every room. Staff had made very effective use of all available space to support pupils' learning across all aspects of the curriculum, including developing the school library and resource area and ICT room. Display across the school was of a very high standard and contributed to the bright, attractive and stimulating learning environment. Pupils benefited from a large playground with adjacent playing fields. Users with restricted mobility had full access to the school building.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Staff, pupils and parents had a strong sense of identity and pride in their school. Staff had successfully created a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Relationships between staff and pupils were very positive. Throughout the school, pupils were polite, friendly and very well behaved. Pupils demonstrated respect for staff and each other, and were engaged in a number of high quality citizenship activities. Staff had set appropriate expectations for attendance and behaviour which were consistently upheld. They were making good progress in establishing consistently high expectations of pupils' wider achievements. However, staff did not always have high enough expectations of pupils' attainment. Pupils had developed a good understanding of issues such as racial equality through the school's programmes in personal and social development, health and religious and moral education. The school made effective use of regular assemblies and enterprise activities to provide very good opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of global citizenship. Assemblies were appropriately used for religious observance.</p>

Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had established very good partnerships with parents, the Parent Council, partner agencies and the wider community. The headteacher communicated very effectively with parents through regular newsletters about the work of the school. Reports to parents about their children's progress provided very helpful and detailed information. The headteacher ensured that parents' views were taken into account when planning curricular workshops. Parents had regular opportunities to be involved in supporting their children's learning. They were invited on a monthly basis to observe aspects of learning and teaching to help them understand more about how their child learned at school. Parents were involved in developing the school garden and running the after school basketball club. The headteacher regularly consulted parents about key aspects of the school's work, including sensitive aspects of health education. Pupils' involvement in school shows and fundraising enhanced the school's reputation in the local community. Links with other schools in the cluster were very effective and offered opportunities for staff to work together to ensure greater consistency in pupils' learning in a number of curricular areas.

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Westfield Primary School provided good quality education for its pupils within a very caring and supportive environment. Staff were committed to the school. They worked well together, regularly reflected on teaching and learning and sharing good practice. All staff made effective use of praise to motivate and encourage pupils. Pupils were polite, confident and very well behaved. The overall quality of teaching was good and pupils enjoyed positive learning experiences. Pupils' attainment was good in English language and adequate in mathematics. There was scope for further improvement in writing and aspects of mathematics. The school had the capacity to ensure ongoing improvement.

The headteacher led Westfield Primary School very well. Her open and approachable leadership style was highly respected by staff, pupils and parents. In her short time in post, she had demonstrated a clear vision for the future development of the school and communicated this very well to staff and parents. She had fostered very good teamwork with staff, placing the needs of individual pupils at the centre of all improvements. She had successfully led improvements in the curriculum, in staff development and in monitoring and tracking progress. The staff team in the school was still establishing itself as all three teachers and a member of the support staff had joined the team within the last six months. The acting principal teacher fulfilled her remit very well and staff valued her support and helpful advice. She had been successful in leading support for learning and developing very high quality enterprise education across the school. She managed the support staff very well and supported the headteacher effectively in her quality assurance role. Teachers

and support staff were given appropriate leadership responsibilities in a number of areas such as running the school garden, developing enterprise activities and health promotion. Staff visited other establishments regularly to observe practice and cooperated with staff from Torphichen Primary School to share and disseminate good practice. The school's approaches to improving the quality of its work through self-evaluation were good. The headteacher had recently involved staff in reviewing the work of the school and identifying priorities for development. The headteacher and principal teacher worked well with teachers to review teaching plans and to sample pupils' work. They provided helpful oral and written feedback on teachers' plans. However, these approaches were at early stages of development and the feedback to staff was not sufficiently focused on raising the attainment of individual pupils and ensuring appropriate pace and challenge.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to:

- raise attainment by increasing pace and challenge for all pupils;
- improve attainment in mathematics by progressively developing pupils' skills in information handling, problem solving and agility in mental calculations;
and
- further develop pupils' skills and confidence in extended writing and writing for a variety of purposes.

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

June Orr
HM Inspector

22 April 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	very good
Teaching for effective learning	good
Learners' experiences	good
Improvement in performance: English language	good
Improvement in performance: mathematics	adequate

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	very good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	very good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff showed care and concern for their children and dealt fairly with them. • The school had a good reputation in the community. • Parents felt welcome in the school and found parents' evenings helpful and informative. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers listened to them. • Teachers explained things clearly and were good at letting them know how their learning could be improved. • Pupils had a say in deciding how to make the school better. • All pupils were treated fairly and the school helped pupils keep safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was mutual respect between staff and pupils. • There was effective communication between senior managers, effective teamwork and regular staff discussion on school priorities. • Staff training time was used effectively. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

Appendix 3 Good practice

In the course of the inspection, the following aspects of innovative and effective practice were evaluated as being worthy of wider dissemination.

Enterprise

Enterprise permeated the curriculum and wider achievement of pupils. At all stages, pupils took part in high quality enterprise activities. The school delivered enterprise through well planned nurture groups which ran within the school day for identified blocks of time and also through a weekly after school club which was open to all pupils.

Pupils were carefully selected to take part in enterprise 'nurture' groups on the basis of developing a range of skills and promoting pupils' independence. The idea behind the term 'nurture' in this context was to develop pupils' enterprise skills in a structured way taking good account of individual needs. The activities were very effective in developing pupils' confidence and self esteem as well as their ability to work with others in a team. A few pupils were selected for inclusion in groups to develop their capacity to work collaboratively with others.

In the nurture groups and the after school group the principal teacher acted as a facilitator and had very well planned activities to encourage pupils to work in teams to develop their own initiatives. ICT was used well to enable pupils to brainstorm activities and sample practice in other areas. Enterprise activities were effectively linked to developing pupils' citizenship skills and awareness of sustainable development. For example, pupils in the enterprise nurture group were considering how they could host an event to raise funds for getting water to poorer communities in Africa.

The 'Square Foot Garden Project' in school combined enterprise and environmental awareness effectively. Pupils, staff, parents and members of the community created an outdoor learning environment consisting of a vegetable plot and flower garden from a grassed area. Summer term topics were designed around the project and pupils planted flowers and vegetables and carried out science experiments using this garden. This initiative won the 'best use of resources' category in the West Lothian Celebrating Success Awards in June 2007.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education and Cultural Services, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA or by telephoning 01506 600351. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@sps.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.sps.org.uk.

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