

Whitchurch Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113267
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357306
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Ord and David Anning
Headteacher	Angela O'Shea-Warman
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2007
School address	School Road Devon PL19 9SR
Telephone number	01822616202
Fax number	01822 617557
Email address	admin@whitchurch-primary.devon.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' progress, school development planning and keeping children and pupils safe. They analysed the responses to questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 132 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and progress of pupils with moderate special educational needs and/or disabilities, and of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics and science.
- The impact of the use of information and communication technology on teaching and learning.
- The attainment and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially boys' early writing skills.
- The strength of the school's partnerships with parents, carers and others, and its contribution to community cohesion.

Information about the school

This school is of smaller than average size and serves part of a market town on the edge of Dartmoor. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies from year to year, but is broadly average. Their needs are mostly moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.

The governing body manages an after-school club which provides childcare. A pre-school is sited in the school grounds. This is not managed by the governing body so was not inspected on this occasion.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has a number of strengths, including the excellent care, guidance and support that pupils receive. 'The staff team offer great support to both parents and pupils' is a typical comment from a parent or carer. Pupils and their individual needs are well known to staff. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress has been effective in identifying those in need of extra help, which in turn has enabled all groups of pupils to make equally good progress. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. The house system allows pupils to take responsibility within the school and they make an outstanding contribution beyond the school, for example through the high quality school band and choir giving performances to the elderly and other community groups. These contributions, coupled with pupils' good behaviour and many opportunities to reflect on world events such as the recent floods in Australia and other countries, lead to excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This outward-looking approach is also apparent in the school's outstanding partnerships with other local schools, external agencies and with local and national bodies.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school, so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is above the national average and in some cases is high. Pupils are well taught by teachers with good subject knowledge who strongly encourage good behaviour. They set interesting tasks, but these are sometimes allowed to continue for too long so that pupils lose focus and learning slows. The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' progress is very effective, especially when they are teaching small groups of pupils with particular needs, so pupils with moderate learning difficulties make good progress. There are good assessment systems that help pupils to improve their work, but the quality and effectiveness of these, especially written marking, varies from class to class. The good curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities that include sport, creative arts and outdoor education. The school has correctly identified that its provision for information and communication technology is in need of strengthening and updating, and has commenced work on this. While all classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, these are not always used as effectively as they might be.

Leaders, managers and the governing body have a clear vision of the school as providing a rounded education for 'the whole child'. They have successfully communicated this to the staff team and to the very large majority of parents and carers. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, derived from good quality self-evaluation, and have taken effective action to improve the weaker aspects, as shown by the steadily rising attainment of pupils and by other improvements, such as to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The sometimes legitimate concerns of a few parents and carers are given appropriate priority and have led to improvements, for example to the quality of displays around the school. Taken as a whole, these features demonstrate the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils' progress is maximised through:
 - greater use of timed tasks that encourage a good pace of learning
 - more consistent use of existing assessment practice, especially written marking.
- Improve the use of information and communication technology as a tool for teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers make optimum use of the resources, especially interactive whiteboards, to promote pupils' interest and understanding
 - building on existing staff expertise to ensure that all lessons in which the technology is used are as good as the best.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In national tests taken in 2010, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 was high in English and above average in mathematics. As they start school with skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected, this represents good progress. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that these levels of attainment are also reached in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed detailed, accurate knowledge of the components of an electrical circuit and their functions, and could explain subtleties such as the difference between a cell and a battery. Pupils in Year 5 could write sensitive and emotive sentences to describe photographs of the recent floods in Australia, using sophisticated language such as 'devastating' and 'depressing'. Examples of work of an above average standard were also seen in music, art and modern foreign languages. The wide range of links enables pupils to have a better than expected understanding of those of other cultures and faiths, both in the United Kingdom and globally. There is strong evidence that pupils make good progress throughout the school and that actions taken to ensure that all groups, such as boys and girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress, have been effective. More able pupils also make good progress in mathematics and science.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A few say there has been some bullying in the past but that this was dealt with effectively and is now reducing. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils enjoy plenty of exercise and understand its importance. They are also aware of what constitutes a healthy diet, although a few make unhealthy choices at break times. Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown by their above average attendance, including during periods of heavy snowfall during 2010, when the school remained open. The skills pupils will need in later life, such as literacy, numeracy and independence, are developing well and reflect their good overall achievement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils and the use of teaching assistants is especially effective, particularly when they structure the learning for lower-attaining pupils. This enables these pupils to make good progress on similar tasks to the rest of the class, such as in learning their letters and sounds in Years 1 and 2. In the best lessons, resources such as video clips are used to enhance pupils' understanding but opportunities to do this are sometimes missed. Regular assessment is used well to monitor progress, and teachers and pupils discuss work and how to improve it. Written marking is sometimes very helpful in showing pupils what to do next, but this is not always the case.

The curriculum makes good use of the school grounds and local area to encourage outdoor learning. There is a good range of subject content, including modern foreign languages, creative arts and physical education, but the relevance of the work to pupils' other learning and future lives is not always made clear. However, the excellent care, guidance and support enable pupils to learn quickly. There are especially good links with local pre-schools and the nearby secondary school, and pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils enjoy the after-school club which provides good quality childcare for those who attend it, meets all requirements and makes a positive contribution to the extended services offered by the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the leadership of the experienced headteacher, the school has improved and staff morale is high. The governing body and the staff aspire for the school to become outstanding. Subject leaders recognise areas for improvement and are taking action to ensure that this happens. Recent developments such as an improved website and very active parents' forum have improved communications with parents and carers. The governing body both supports the school and holds it to account and has been especially active in addressing the concerns of a small minority of parents and carers. Actions to keep children and pupils safe are good and are given a high priority. Systems are robustly reviewed and meet all requirements, any minor shortcomings are remedied. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, as demonstrated by the fact that all pupils make equally good progress, and any potential discrimination is identified and tackled effectively. The school has excellent partnerships, for example with agencies that support pupils facing difficult circumstances.

Regular monitoring takes place, including of the quality of teaching, and external expertise is used to ensure the accuracy of judgements. Self-evaluation and development planning are accurate and realistic. While it is clear that staff have a good knowledge of the school and its pupils, the details are not always recorded as accurately and succinctly as they might be. As an example, the school through its excellent links, such as with an inner-city school and others overseas, and its positive response to nearby housing development, makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their social and emotional development and in developing their communication skills. They quickly adapt to new routines and enter Year 1 well prepared for more formal learning. Staff have introduced successful strategies to develop boys' early writing skills, previously a relative weakness, and good examples were seen of both boys' and girls' rapidly developing writing skills. Children experience a good range of activities both indoors and outside, where there is an attractive covered area, and have opportunities to make choices and develop independence, although there are occasions when adults intervene too readily. Care and welfare arrangements are very good; as a result, the children behave well and develop confidence. Relationships with parents and carers are good: 'I am very impressed with how the staff have helped my child to settle in', is a typical comment.

The staff work as a dedicated team and are effective in assessing children's progress and adapting their programme accordingly. Learning journals demonstrate the progress they are making to parents, carers and others with a legitimate interest. The good leadership fosters this team approach. Any weaknesses are accurately identified and appropriate action is taken to put things right.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the inspectors' questionnaire were received from 60% of parents and carers, which is an above average response. A very large majority were positive about all aspects of the school, especially the quality of the teaching, the way the school prepares their children for the next stage of education, and its provision to keep their children healthy and safe. The evidence gathered during the inspection supports these positive views.

A few parents or carers expressed a range of concerns, including about the quality of the school's communication with them, the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with, and the ways in which teaching assistants are deployed. Evidence gathered found that where such concerns were justified, school leaders had accepted this and had made changes. In other cases, including concerning the use of teaching assistants, no evidence was found to support these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitchurch Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection received 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 221 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	59	47	36	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	62	40	30	7	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	58	44	65	49	5	4	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	47	57	43	10	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	58	46	35	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	50	53	40	8	6	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	57	48	36	5	4	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	60	45	60	45	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	49	54	41	10	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	41	57	43	11	8	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	47	56	42	5	4	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	76	58	43	33	2	2	7	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	59	43	33	8	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitchurch Community Primary School, Tavistock, PL19 9SR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. A special thanks to those of you who gave up your time to speak to us or to show us your work. This letter is to tell you about what we found.

Yours is a good school. You all make good progress in your work and by the time you leave Year 6 your attainment is above average. You behave well. Some of you told us there was some bullying, but it is dealt with well and is now less than in the past. You know how to keep safe and healthy, although a few of you eat sweets and crisps at break time. You are excellent at helping other people in school and outside. I especially enjoyed listening to the band. The music was of high quality and I understand you play for older people and others in the community.

You are taught well and those of you who need a bit of extra help are given it, so the teachers and teaching assistants do a good job. Most of your work is interesting and exciting, and what is on offer out of school time is especially good. The staff keep you safe and take excellent care of all of you because they know you well as individuals. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body lead the school well and live up to their promise to educate 'the whole child'. They have good links with your parents and carers and excellent links with other schools, so you are well prepared when you move on to secondary school.

Even good schools can improve, so we are asking the staff to give you more timed tasks to increase the speed at which you learn, and to make sure more of your work is marked with helpful comments. We are also asking them to make better use of the interactive whiteboards and to give you all good opportunities to learn about using information and communication technology (ICT). You can help by politely discussing your work with your teachers and making suggestions that you think might help.

With very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead inspector

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