

Whitleigh Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132215
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	360402
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Vernon Pinches
Headteacher	Mr Ian Cording
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 11 classes, observed the teaching of 12 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and some parents. They observed the school's work including an assembly, play time and lunch time. Inspectors also looked at a range of evidence, including data on pupils' progress, pupils' work, teachers' planning, curriculum documents, minutes of meetings and information on the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. Questionnaire responses from 68 parents and carers, 132 pupils and 17 staff were also analysed.

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

- The progress of more capable pupils and of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of recent improvements in teaching and assessment and whether they have had sufficient impact on raising standards, particularly in English.
- The strength of the school's leadership and its capacity to secure continued improvement in the school's performance.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in providing challenge and in holding the school to account.
- The impact of the federation on the school's work.

Information about the school

Whitleigh Community Primary School is part of the Woodview Learning Community, a federation which also includes a secondary school, a special school, a children's centre, a nursery and a centre for young parents. The school is of larger than average size and is located on a campus, together with the other providers, in north Plymouth. There is one governing body for all the providers and a campus director is responsible for promoting collaboration between the various partners. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly associated with the acquisition of language and literacy skills. The school's extended provision includes breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs which are managed by other providers.

The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work, including Healthy School Award, Artsmark Silver, Sportsmark Gold, Investors in People and the Plymouth Induction Quality Mark. When the school was last inspected in November 2009, it was judged to require significant improvement due to pupils' low achievement and the inadequate procedures for safeguarding pupils.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Whiteleigh Community Primary School is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and attainment has risen markedly following the introduction of a good range of targeted strategies that have raised standards in numeracy and literacy. Pupils' attainment remains low, but their learning and progress are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Arrangements for safeguarding have been strengthened and are now good.

The school provides a happy and caring environment which is effective in promoting pupils' good personal development. Pupils behave well and are proud of their school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well and make a good start to their education. Parents hold overwhelmingly positive views of the school and recognise how much it has improved in the last two years.

Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and it is now good. Interesting lessons ensure pupils enjoy learning. Historic weaknesses in pupils' literacy are generally being tackled effectively, although a few of the more capable pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their creative writing, whilst those at the early stages do not always receive clear guidance on how to improve their handwriting. The school recognises this and has plans to review its literacy policy.

The school has established thorough systems for assessing and tracking the progress of most groups of pupils. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support which is often of a high standard. These pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress because targets for some are not always sufficiently precise to make the next steps in learning clear and systems for reviewing their progress are underdeveloped. The curriculum is satisfactory. It has significant strengths in the range of clubs and enrichment activities on offer and in the provision of topics which ensure pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. Planning is not complete to ensure all aspects of science, history and geography are covered and to make sure that the skills and knowledge that pupils acquire build on what they already know.

Strong links have been established with parents and carers, partners in the federation and others in the wider community. Provision of a broad range of clubs and activities, access to high quality facilities, and the sharing of professional expertise ensure the federation has a positive impact on pupils' learning and on their personal development.

The headteacher is supported by a strong team of senior leaders who have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Good self-evaluation,

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linked to a determination to raise standards, has helped to secure significant improvements since the last inspection, especially in teaching and learning. The pace of improvement and strength of leadership demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The governing body is supportive of the school and it has recently been reorganised to provide greater focus on the work of each individual school on the campus. These changes have not yet had time to make an impact and to ensure that the governing body has a close understanding of how to monitor and challenge the school's performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - providing extended writing opportunities for more capable pupils
 - setting more precise targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - updating the literacy policy to provide clearer guidance on improving pupils' handwriting.
- Extend curriculum planning to ensure suitable coverage of science, history and geography and to make sure that the skills and knowledge that pupils acquire build on what they already know.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the governing body's knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate the school's performance
 - sharpening systems for reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Given the school's strong capacity for improvement, it should be possible to implement and see the impact of these changes by the end of the summer term 2011.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been below the national average for the last three years. However, progress has accelerated in the last two years, particularly in mathematics, where test results in 2010 were close to the national average. Pupils' attainment in English has also improved, although less markedly. A good range of strategies has been introduced which are successfully developing pupils' language and literacy skills in classes across the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although the school recognises that some of the more capable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities need more appropriate challenge to accelerate their learning. Pupils' learning in the classroom is good. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and they contain a good variety of activities. As one pupil reported, 'Teachers make it fun to learn.' There are good examples of pupils developing their information and

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communication technology skills, for example when they research topics in history and geography.

Pupils are good ambassadors for their school and they appreciate the resources the campus provides. Pupils play an active part in the life of the school and wider community, for example through the school council, acting as monitors in the playground, helping senior citizens in the area and raising funds for charity. In lessons, pupils demonstrate good social skills and work cooperatively with one another. Pupils' self-esteem is promoted well in assemblies which provide good opportunities for reflection and for pupils' successes and achievements to be recognised. During the inspection, an excellent animation was shown which had been produced by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and had won first prize in a Plymouth competition. Attendance shows a steady improvement due to the efforts of the school in following up absences and it is now broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' good interpersonal skills, together with their improving numeracy and literacy skills, ensure their preparation for the world of work is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and it is now more consistent due to the monitoring and support provided by senior leaders. A purposeful climate for learning exists and routines are well established in classes across the school. The purpose of lessons is explained clearly, often with the aid of an interactive

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whiteboard. Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to give reasons for their answers and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas with each other, and appropriate grouping provides for the wide range of abilities that is present in most classes. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, for example when they run small groups and provide extra help for those struggling with literacy. Teachers have done much work recently to clarify pupils' learning targets and to involve pupils in discussing their progress. Most pupils are aware of their targets for improvement and marking usually gives detailed advice to help them correct and revise their work. Occasionally, suggestions for improvement are not followed up by pupils and the targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sometimes too broad.

The curriculum is currently being revised so that it takes close account of pupils' needs and interests. Planning for English and mathematics is successful in ensuring that pupils' skills improve as they move up the school and this has had an impact on raising standards. A topic approach is being developed to provide for learning in science, humanities and the arts although planning for these subjects is not yet complete. Pupils enjoy the enrichment activities, which include visits from authors and well-known local people, 'Forest School' outdoor learning activities and day and residential trips to Devon and Cornwall. A high proportion also attend the after-school clubs, for example choir, netball, tag rugby and football.

The school presents a welcoming environment for pupils and parents. In the words of one parent, 'This is a very caring school. My child and I don't hesitate to go to any of the teachers if we have a concern.' Pupils report that they feel safe and that rare incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. They like the 'worry box' which allows them to raise any issues or concerns anonymously, knowing that they will be considered sympathetically by staff. Good induction and transition arrangements are in place and vulnerable pupils benefit from appropriate support from a wide range of professionals, for example speech and language therapists and social workers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a thoughtful and inclusive style of leadership which has helped pupils, parents and staff to develop a strong sense of pride in their school. He has established a committed staff team who share the school's vision and determination to raise standards. This shared sense of purpose has played a major part in moving the

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school forward. As one parent commented, 'Since Mr Cording has taken the school over, things have changed so much, and all for the good.'

All pupils are encouraged to take part in school life and senior leaders analyse information to check how well different groups are progressing. The school is aware that some groups of pupils need to make faster progress in their learning and has plans to tackle this. Rigorous systems are in place for monitoring teaching and learning and curriculum leaders have suitable plans to improve their subjects.

The school has suitable plans to promote community cohesion based on an audit of its provision. Strong links exist with the local community and an international link with a school in Uganda has been established in the past year. Links with the various ethnic and religious groups represented in the wider United Kingdom are less developed. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet all the requirements.

Members of the governing body make regular visits to the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They recognise that more detailed information on the school's work will enhance their ability to hold the school to account. The school deploys staff and resources efficiently and provides satisfactory value for money.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Positive links with parents and carers based on good systems for communication ensure children settle well when they begin nursery. Children's attainment on entry is very varied, although for many it is much lower than that expected for their age, particularly in their speech and language and emotional development. They make good progress in the Early Years and Foundation Stage, although by the time they leave, attainment is still below expectations.

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Children grow in confidence and learn to take turns and to work in a group. Their learning is promoted well through taking part in role play and 'real life' activities, such as playing shops to develop numeracy and personal and social skills, or writing a letter to Father Christmas to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds. A good range of resources and equipment helps to promote children's physical skills and their creative development. A good balance is maintained between child-initiated and adult-led activities, and children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas of learning.

Good leadership and management ensure that daily routines run smoothly and that children are cared for well. Regular assessment and weekly planning meetings ensure children's gains in learning are captured and used to extend their learning. Good links with other settings and agencies, for example the parent support worker and the children's centre, ensure the individual needs of children are met well.

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

Parents hold very positive views about the school's work. They feel confident to approach the school if they have any concerns and appreciate how the staff go out of their way to resolve such concerns. The school is active in working with parents as partners in order to improve pupils' education. For example, the Tuesday morning craft group is highly valued by the small group of parents who attend. Parents particularly value the work of the parent support worker who has made a significant contribution to improving parents' involvement in the school. A very small number of parents raised concerns about communication with the school and about supervision in the playground. Inspectors found the school had good arrangements for communicating with parents and that playtimes were supervised well and that pupils had access to a good range of equipment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whiteleigh 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 team received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	61	23	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	56	25	41	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	56	22	36	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	62	21	34	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	64	20	33	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	52	26	43	1	2	1	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)	31	51	20	33	5	8	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	52	27	44	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	44	27	44	2	3	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	46	27	44	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	31	51	28	46	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	64	21	34	1	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitleigh Community Primary School, Plymouth PL5 4AA

I enjoyed my visit very much and found yours to be a happy school. Thanks to those who talked to me about your work and life at school. Here are the main points.

- Your school has had difficulties in the past and I am pleased to say that it is much improved.
- The standard of education is now satisfactory and is getting better.
- You describe how you enjoy coming to school because of the interesting lessons, trips, visits and clubs on offer.
- You make satisfactory progress with your learning because teachers have worked hard to make sure teaching is good.
- The school helps you to play a big part in school life and to develop a good understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- You cooperate well with each other and your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Adults run the school well and make sure you receive the right level of care and support to make you feel safe.
- The school works closely with your parents, who are extremely pleased with how the school helps you learn.

I have asked the school to do a few things to improve itself. These are to:

- give more help to those of you who need to improve your writing and encourage some of you to put more of your own ideas into stories
- check that those of you who find work difficult get sharper targets to help you improve your work more quickly
- make sure that teachers' plans ensure you study enough science, history and geograph.
- make sure that adults who run the school check in more detail how well the school is working.

You can help by always trying your hardest. Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath

Her Majesty's Inspector

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