

# Whitings Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number101304Local AuthorityBarnetInspection number354978

Inspection dates10-11 November 2010Reporting inspectorSusan Thomas-Pounce

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 355

Appropriate authority

Chair

Richard Jefferies

HeadteacherSusan ConveryDate of previous school inspection12 October 2006School addressWhitings Road

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 25 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, local authority reviews and a range of other school documents, particularly those relating to attendance. The inspection team analysed questionnaires completed by 124 parents and carers, 162 pupils and 24 staff. They also held discussions with several individual parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether teaching and the progress of pupils have improved since the previous inspection.
- The effectiveness of performance monitoring and analysis of data to track improvement.
- The impact of the school's expansion on improvements to pupils' learning and wellbeing.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than an average primary school. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with no one group predominating. More pupils speak English as an additional language than in most schools. Pupil mobility is high with a higher than average proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school part-way through their primary education. This includes a number of pupils who arrive from other countries as refugees or asylum seekers, a high proportion of whom are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is in line with that found nationally. The school holds a number of awards including recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles.

The school has expanded since the previous inspection. The current headteacher operated as executive headteacher of Barnet Hill School and Whitings Hill School from January 2008. In 2009, Barnet Hill School closed and pupils and staff were transferred to Whitings Hill School. A new school was built to accommodate the additional classes. The school is housed in a new building which includes a swimming pool.

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

# **Inspection judgements**

## Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

# The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

# **Main findings**

This school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Improvements have been largely due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She has very successfully built a highly dedicated and committed staff team from the two schools, integrated pupils and formed exceptionally positive links with parents and carers. The vision of the headteacher and senior staff, supported by an outstanding governing body, has established a number of strategies which are continuously accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school's work and are reflected in pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, exemplary behaviour and extremely good contribution to the school and the wider community. Many children enter school with levels of skills and abilities that are far lower than expected for their age. Children benefit from the increasingly good start in Nursery and Reception, which prepares them outstandingly well as learners. Attainment fell below that expected nationally in 2007. As a result of extremely well-targeted intervention, attainment has dramatically improved. By the time they leave school, pupils' attainment is above average overall with strengths in mathematics and science. This represents good progress overall, with some aspects that are exceptional.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and most is now good or better. Although good, there is some variation in its impact on pupils' learning. Lessons promote some quicker learning and stronger progress in mathematics and science compared to writing. Although the school has ensured that the curriculum has a strong emphasis on the development of literacy to address the weak communication skills of many children when they start school, there are still relatively few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing skills in other subjects. Inspectors found that attainment and progress in writing are areas for development, which the school is already addressing.

The school's outstanding work in promoting equality of opportunity is evident in the good progress and achievement made by all groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult. This is particularly the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language; their progress is also good, largely as a result of the school's strong emphasis on language development. The school has a very good knowledge of vulnerable pupils including some who have come from other schools where they have been less successful. A wide range of strategies is used successfully to support the many pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The schools' work with parents and carers is outstanding. High quality links have been developed which ensure a strong partnership that has positive effects on pupils' learning. The high quality management of teaching and learning has secured consistently good learning experiences for all pupils by inspiring staff to have high expectations of

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themselves and their pupils. All staff work very effectively as a team. Governors carry out their statutory duties extremely well, they are very well informed and rigorously hold the school to account. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate and its track record of exceptional improvement and relentless impetus to become even better demonstrate an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing for all pupils by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy skills in other subjects
  - ensuring teachers always provide inspiring and imaginative stimuli to encourage the development of writing skills.

# Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children learn effectively and enjoy school because of the good teaching and the exceptional learning environment, which together stimulate learning. There is a wide range of creative resources which reflect the multi-racial make up of the school. New joiners, including those who speak English as an additional language, are very carefully monitored and the school provides highly effective support. Progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully monitored and support adjusted appropriately. Challenging targets are set and met. One parent commented that her son, who found learning difficult, had made little progress at his previous school but was now happy and making amazing progress at this school, 'It has given him wings to fly.'

The school sets exceptionally challenging targets for pupils and has very high expectations of success. During the inspection there was much evidence of the high standard of learning celebrated in the display of pupils' work, for example on 'identity and family', and wonderful winter poems involving the creative use of information and communication technology techniques. Exciting learning was seen in setting up a 'jam factory' and in a Year 6 lesson, where confident pupils shared the results of research about their families using a well-crafted electronic presentation.

While pupils' skills in reading are good, skills in writing are weaker. Although many good strategies have been introduced and progress is improving in the development of writing techniques, teachers occasionally stick too closely to an uncreative interpretation of the curriculum framework. There are too few opportunities to develop writing in a wider range of contexts and by use of more inspiring and imaginative stimuli.

Pupils' strong spiritual values and their mature understanding and respect for cultural diversity ensure the school is a happy and secure place to work and play. Pupils show exceptionally good powers of reflection, especially in assemblies. During the Remembrance Day assembly, they demonstrated how they could think deeply about making a sacrifice for others. Pupils say they feel very safe because they know that any problems are dealt with quickly. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and join in physical activities enthusiastically. They love their new swimming pool and really look forward to their weekly lessons. The very active school council helps to organise a wide range of activities including regular fund raising. The school has very strong links with the church. The Easter Garden that pupils made was greatly appreciated by the

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church community. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school. They leave the school as confident interested learners. Attendance is average and has improved sharply because of very good systems to promote it.

## These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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?

Many parents spoke to inspectors about the high quality care provided. 'The first priority of the staff is the well-being and happiness of all the children'; 'I couldn't ask for more'; 'The children from the two schools have bonded very well.' Inspectors found numerous examples of this excellent aspect of provision.

The quality of teaching and learning is good with pockets of excellence in all year groups. Against a backdrop of setting up systems for the new school, good quality teaching has been established. This, combined with pupils' enthusiasm to do well, ensures that pupils make good progress with some making very good progress. Teachers know pupils' needs very well and successfully plan support. This is especially effective in mathematics and science but less strong in writing. The quality of teaching is enhanced by the clever use of active learning techniques. These include whiteboards, talk partners and interactive whiteboards. Good use of assessment ensures that ability groups are specifically planned for. Extensive support is provided in a variety of ways: one-to-one tuition; in-class help and targeted support provided by skilled learning mentors. Teaching assistants are well trained and are well used so that all pupils who find learning difficult make good progress.

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

There is a very strong planning framework for the delivery of the curriculum which is very well organised into sequential topics with good links across subjects, with the exception of providing sufficient opportunities to extend writing. There is a wide range of learning experiences provided, including role-play and good use of information and communication technology. There are successful, ambitious links and topics across subjects, which are culturally and ethnically diverse, community oriented and focused on the world of work. There is rich extra-curricular provision with high participation by pupils. The swimming pool is much enjoyed and appreciated.

## 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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, supported very effectively by staff and governors, have driven the considerable improvement in the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher is passionate about learning and has established an excellent school where pupils can achieve their best. The challenges of expanding a school and overseeing a new school building have been carefully balanced against the demands of working with two separate school populations and putting systems and structures in place to meet the specific needs of children as well as inspiring staff and eliciting the support of parents and carers. The school has made an outstanding start in establishing itself in the community. Parents and carers spoke warmly about the fantastic way the merger was managed. They commented on the strong parental consultation and involvement. Several said the transition had been seamless. 'Not only do I think the school is great, I am very impressed how last year a new school opened as two schools emerged to be one; well done to everyone!' There is an outstanding partnership between the school and parents to the benefit of learning.

Morale is high at the school. Staff feel fully involved in the school's development and share the headteacher's vision. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning means that staff and pupils know the next steps for improvement. Equality of opportunity for all underpins the aims and values of the school. There is no evidence of discrimination.

The school's work to promote community cohesion is effective. There are extensive examples of local, national and many very good international links. The school has developed an appropriate, ambitious plan across all aspects of its work which leaders and managers are monitoring effectively.

Safeguarding requirements are securely met. Systems and procedures are robust and effective. The governing body provides outstanding support and fulfils all statutory duties very effectively. Governors are very well informed; they provide rigorous challenge and

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have a very secure view of the school's strategic direction and priorities which they helped to formulate. They have helped ensure that accommodation is excellent and very well maintained. The school's excellent value for money is reflected in pupils' outstanding achievement as a result of outstanding aspects of provision.

## These are the grades for leadership and management

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

# **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The outstanding quality of the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children get off to a flying start, especially in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills and creative development. The Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective in promoting children's positive attitudes towards school and their excellent behaviour. Children work and play in a stimulating environment which is both warm and welcoming. Teaching is mostly outstanding, and children's learning is very well planned and pitched to their understanding. Assessment of children's work is very thorough. Progress is tracked meticulously and reported regularly to parents and carers. There is a very good balance between activities initiated by children and those instigated by adults. All who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage are exceptionally secure in their roles and responsibilities. The high levels of pastoral support found throughout the school are also evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Links with parents and carers are close and effective. Parents and carers are very supportive. Comments were received on the, 'incredible progress seen in the Reception class' and the huge variety of activities provided to, 'teach the foundations for good literacy and numeracy skills as well as providing a fun and safe environment.' The experienced Early Years Foundation Stage practitioner provides strong leadership and management. Her highly effective management of children's learning ensures that all make outstanding progress.

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	1
Taking into account:  Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

# Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are hugely supportive of the school. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very satisfied with each aspect of the school's provision. There is strong agreement that children enjoy their work, make good progress and that the school is very well led and managed. These views are wholeheartedly confirmed by inspectors.

Parents and carers appreciate the high standard of education provided by a highly committed and talented staff. A parent spoke for many in commenting, 'The teachers are very hard-working, dedicated and always approachable. Every one of them is a credit to their profession.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitings Hill 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 355 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	56	48	39	5	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	67	54	55	44	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	60	48	57	46	3	2	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	49	56	45	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	61	49	57	46	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	40	64	52	5	4	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	35	73	59	4	3	1	1
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)	45	36	67	54	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	31	70	56	8	6	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	42	62	50	6	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	32	68	55	4	3	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	53	43	59	48	4	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	46	60	48	5	4	2	2

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

Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of scl						
Type of school	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 <a href="https://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>). 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	d success of	f 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: 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.

■ 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.



15 November 2010

### **Dear Pupils**

## Inspection of Whitings Hill Primary School, Barnet, London EN5 2QY

Thank you for your very friendly welcome. My colleagues and I really enjoyed meeting so many of you, sharing lunch and watching you work and play. We could see how much you love coming to school in your wonderful new building and agree you do have an amazing swimming pool. We thought the scarecrows you made in your eco garden were fantastic and were doing a great job scaring the birds!

Since your school was inspected last time, it has changed a lot. It is much bigger and you are learning in a wonderful new purpose-built school. Your school is expertly led by the headteacher and governing body who have worked together to expand the school and make sure the new building is just right for you all. As well as managing these big changes they have also helped you to learn really well: so much so that your school is no longer a satisfactory school but now gives you an outstanding education.

It is easy to see why you enjoy school so much. You reach high standards, especially in mathematics and science. You are well taught and we can see why you find learning fun. As a result you all make good progress, helped by the challenges you receive and the wonderful range of resources. Your teachers and other adults take very good care of you. That is why you feel so safe and behave and learn so well.

We judge your school could improve even further by staff giving you more opportunities to use and apply your writing skills in other subjects so you become as good writers as you are mathematicians and scientists.

All of you can help too by continuing to work hard and supporting each other.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce Lead inspector

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