

White Mere Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108362
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	356345
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Gail Howe
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by seven teachers and they held meetings with members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised 53 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- Whether actions taken by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum are leading to sustainable improvements in attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress.
- Whether the new senior leadership team has initiated appropriate strategies to ensure school improvement.
- Whether pupils have a clear understanding of the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than others of the same type. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy School status. The headteacher has been in post since January 2010, following a period of instability in the leadership of 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In this good school, the highly effective headteacher has revitalised the school after a period when standards declined. She has been very ably supported by the senior leadership team and a highly effective governing body which has taken robust action to support the school through a period of difficult change. Senior leaders have initiated strategies which have led to improvements in leadership and management, teaching, the curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Accordingly, attainment has returned to above average levels and pupils make good progress across school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the caring and effective support they receive. The school's accurate self-evaluation and its rapid success in achieving improvements demonstrate its good capacity to improve and it provides good value for money.

Teaching is good overall and offers pupils many interesting activities which help them to enjoy their learning and see the links between subjects. In some lessons, the pace of learning drops and progress slows. All staff provide sensitive care and support, which ensure that pupils work and play well together, are happy and feel safe. Accordingly, pupils are keen to learn, behave well and have good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy. The school has much useful information about pupils' skills and abilities which is increasingly well used to identify and match work to the learning needs of individual pupils and to measure their progress. Marking is well used to tell pupils how well they have achieved in individual tasks. However, marking and target-setting are not as yet refined enough to ensure that pupils are always clear about how to improve their work. Above-average attainment and attendance, allied to good skills in teamwork and in information and communication technology (ICT), ensure that pupils' development of workplace skills is good.

Pupils have contributed to developments in school and say that the introduction of 'playground friends' and new play equipment has helped to raise their level of enjoyment at break and lunchtimes. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and how to help others. As a result, parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and how it encourages pupils' social and moral development. Pupils have a developing understanding of life in other countries, but their knowledge of different faiths and cultures and of the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom is less well developed. There are good partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex needs. There are particularly strong links with the local authority which has effectively supported the school's drive for 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?

- By the summer of 2012, further accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, by:
 - improving the consistency of teaching so that it is at least good, by ensuring pupils learn at a brisk pace and pupils have enough opportunities to investigate independently or together
 - using marking and target-setting more effectively to help pupils know exactly how to improve their work.
- Develop pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures and the multicultural make-up of society in Great Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is good. Pupils are extremely courteous, have good attitudes, form positive relationships and show great keenness to do well in their work. In lessons they especially enjoy challenging and lively activities, such as playing 'fractions bingo', discussing the best way to gather data by sorting sweets of different colours or writing poetry.

The skills and abilities with which pupils enter school are similar to those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress to attain standards which are above average at the end of Year 6. In recent years, attainment and progress have been stronger in English, but well-targeted initiatives have led to increased progress and raised attainment in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and supported in their learning and they make good progress because their work offers appropriate challenge and interest.

Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their enthusiastic involvement in physical education and the high take-up of healthy school meals. They care for one another very well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel extremely safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils make an increasingly positive contribution to the school community through the school council. This meets regularly and has played a major role in purchasing and organising playground equipment. Pupils willingly take on roles such as peer mediators, helping pupils to behave well and feel safe. They support a range of charities and participate in competitions with other local schools and in activities with the local church and care home. Above-average attendance rates, good punctuality, strong literacy skills and confidence in group work, mean that pupils are well equipped for their future economic well-being.

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	3
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	3

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?

Teachers make learning fun, make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They use questions well to ascertain what pupils already know and to check that they have made progress. They employ interactive whiteboard technology well to engage pupils and plan opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including experiments, games and using ICT. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops because introductory activities go on too long, teachers offer too much information and pupils are prevented from getting on with tasks, independently or together.

The curriculum contributes to pupils' good progress by offering a range of stimulating activities which help them to see the links between subjects. This supports their above-average attainment in English by offering pupils opportunities to write about a range of topics, for example, the Second World War and life in different countries. There are good procedures to encourage pupils' reading. Opportunities for pupils to develop skills in investigative and problem-solving activities in mathematics have had an impact on raising attainment. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to theatres, a science museum in Newcastle and opportunities to work with writers, help to develop their skills in writing, music and science. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which help pupils develop their skills in sporting and environmental activities, including recycling and the development of the school garden.

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All staff have detailed knowledge about the personal and emotional needs of individual pupils so that they are well cared for and they develop self-esteem, respect and a sense of responsibility. Key features are the highly sensitive care for pupils with complex learning needs and the way the school works with vulnerable families to help them support their children's learning. Well-managed practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and transfer to secondary school.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has had a remarkable impact on the school in a short period of time. She has determinedly, rigorously and skilfully pursued and implemented strategies that have brought about an improvement in school effectiveness. She has established and developed a young and vibrant leadership team which has introduced initiatives that have raised attainment and increased rates of pupils' progress. They have developed effective systems for tracking progress and have made the curriculum more stimulating. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are accountable for key areas of the curriculum. They welcome these opportunities to contribute to decision making and the school improvement plan and to advance their own professional development. The governing body has been instrumental in supporting the school through a period of difficult change. It has taken robust action to ensure that a decline in standards and a deficit budget have been remedied.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good, meet government requirements and rigorously secure pupils' safety. The school has close links with outside agencies to support the wide range of individual needs of pupils. There is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are developing links with the local community. There is a growing awareness of life in other countries but pupils' understanding of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society is less well developed. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to involve parents in their children's learning, including supporting learning at home and providing regular information about their children.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a wide range of ability when they start school but overall their skills on entry to Reception are in line with those expected for their age. More children than has been the case in the past have lower skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, writing and calculation. Effective teaching, which is skilfully directed to develop skills in counting, speaking and listening and linking sounds and letters, helps children to make good progress from their starting points. The teacher offers children many challenging activities both indoors and outdoors, in a lively and caring environment and children respond by becoming caring and confident individuals. Children thrive on creative activities such as craft, painting, writing and imaginative play. They particularly enjoy drawing and talking about African animals.

A range of healthy snacks and drinking water, opportunities for exercise and clear guidelines for hand washing, help children to develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are met. Teaching is good because it is securely based on the knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Observations and assessments are used effectively to support and extend children's learning and identify areas for improvement. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and carers that enable children to settle quickly into the Reception class and allow parents and carers to understand how well their children are progressing, especially through children's learning journals. The effective leadership of the phase leader has helped the class teacher to develop her confidence and skills and to secure improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

A small minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The respondents support the school and its leaders extremely strongly with most believing that leadership and management is good. Indeed, many parents and carers commented on the positive impact that the new headteacher has had on the school. The overwhelming majority believes that their child enjoys school, is safe and well-prepared for the future. Almost all believe that teaching is good and that the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour. A very large majority believes the school encourages children to stay healthy. Most parents and carers believe that the school helps them to support their children at home and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. A very large majority is happy with their child's experience at school. The inspection reflects the view that these are all positive features of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at White Mere 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	55	24	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	58	21	40	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	32	34	64	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	34	29	55	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	47	26	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	45	26	49	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	43	28	53	2	4	0	0
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)	15	28	35	66	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	40	27	51	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	32	29	55	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	32	60	4	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	42	25	47	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	51	24	45	2	4	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.



18 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of White Mere Community Primary School, Gateshead, NE10 8BA

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you so much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a good school which is improving rapidly because your teachers know what to do to make it better. The team was impressed by your behaviour, politeness and the great care and respect you have for one another. You take pride in your work and work hard in lessons. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the way they try to make your lessons enjoyable. You also enjoy the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. Your teachers take great care of you and your parents and carers like the school very much.

We have asked your school to improve even more, by:

- helping you to reach even higher standards at the end of Year 6, by making sure that all your lessons are as good as the very best lessons you have
- making sure that marking and target-setting tells you clearly how to improve your work
- helping you to learn more about the people from different faiths and cultures who live in Great Britain.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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