

Whaplode Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120555
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358789
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cyril Hearn
Headteacher	Mary Grist
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons and all seven class teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at pupils' work and attended an assembly. They talked with many pupils, and met members of their families at the start of the school day. School documents were scrutinised including policies, development planning, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documents. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, as well as the headteacher's reports to this body, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 68 parents and carers, 15 members of staff and 94 Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- What has been the effect of the work undertaken to raise attainment and improve pupils' progress throughout the school?
- What has been the impact of the school's strategies to ensure its different groups of pupils are enabled to achieve equally well, and to close any gaps in outcomes?
- How well is the school developing its systems for assessing pupils' learning and progress?
- What is the impact of the school's current action to develop its curriculum?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It serves its local village and surrounding rural communities. Local population movement in the area means that a lower than average proportion of pupils continue their education right through the school. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is average. The very large majority of children are from White British backgrounds. The percentages from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English an additional language are below average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with most having moderate learning difficulties. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has gained National Healthy School Status and an Activemark award.

The governing body provides a breakfast and after-school club, the Whaplode Kids' Club, each day during term time for its pupils aged 4 to 11.

Childcare is provided on-site during the day by the Acorn Pre-School Committee. This private provision is reported on separately by Ofsted.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through each year group. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is average. In the 2010 national tests, school data show pupils' were below average in English but average in mathematics and science. In 2009, attainment by Year 6 in English was above average. Additional assessment systems have been established to more securely track the progress of individual pupils in Years 3 to 6. Tracking is currently helping the school to target help and support much more accurately. These assessment systems have still to be fully introduced in Years 1 and 2. New strategies for assessing pupils' learning and progress in literacy and numeracy have been introduced satisfactorily, but have yet to be established for science. Approaches to assessing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are also being refined. Over the past four years, there has been a steady trend of improvement in outcomes. However, standards have remained average, overall, and progress has not yet improved sufficiently to be securely good. Consequently, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is sound.

The school is developing a more creative curriculum. Consequently, pupils are beginning to make relevant links between subjects and use the skills and knowledge gained in one area to support, effectively, their learning in others. Implementation of these developments has yet to be completed. Where the new curriculum developments are established, they are enhancing learning and enabling pupils to make the important gains in attainment which are gradually improving their progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have good attitudes to school because they say that what they are learning makes better sense. Where the new curriculum is in place, pupils are inspired by the challenges it offers.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They respect well each other and their teachers. This respect is underpinned by good pastoral support and the day-to-day care provided by adults. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, with examples of good and outstanding practice. There are inconsistencies in the use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding sufficiently deeply to enable them to explain their thinking. Lesson planning does not always identify clearly or precisely how the learning of different individuals or groups are to be assessed.

The school has an enthusiastic group of teachers who work hard on the pupils' behalf. Those with more experience support well those who are relatively new to their posts. Not all middle leaders and subject coordinators have completed the training necessary to enable them to take on full responsibility for their areas and enable the headteacher to delegate, more effectively, aspects of management. A real strength of the school was summarised by one parent when writing, 'I love the school because all the staff have the capability to talk to all the kids and make them feel that bit more special.'

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the current academic year, raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their learning and progress throughout the school by:
 - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring a more consistent approach to the planning for and use of assessment in the classroom, particularly through the use of questioning
 - refining and embedding arrangements for tracking the progress of individual pupils through implementing in Key Stage 1 the good systems established successfully in Key Stage 2
 - enhancing the implementation of assessment strategies for literacy and numeracy by extending these practices to other subjects
 - completing the phased introduction of the school's new, creative curriculum, in order to challenge and inspire pupils further.
 - Ensure that all middle and subject leaders fully develop the important management skills they need to support the headteacher's drive for improvement.
- 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

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is typical of the age group. In most lessons seen, attainment was average and progress satisfactory for all social and ethnic groups. Pupils identified as gifted or talented, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of others.

The ways which learning and progress are being improved were seen in two excellent Year 2 lessons. Learning in a stimulating environment provided excellent challenge and fun for pupils in writing and evaluating complex, extended sentences describing a castle. This supported their development not only as writers but also as historians. In a mathematics lesson, the pupils were excited by the concept of 'criterion' when working cooperatively to sort numbers and objects, thus extending both their literacy and numeracy skills. Attainment here was above average for their age. In a Year 6 'core skills' lesson, where pupils were challenged to build a platform 20 centimetres high to hold as heavy a weight as possible, attainment was above average and progress good. In this lesson, links between mathematics, design and technology and pupils' personal development and teamwork showed how good teaching and an improved curriculum are raising attainment and achievement.

A strength of the pupils' personal development is the way they interact with each other. Behaviour is good, and most pupils set themselves suitably high standards. Pupils cooperate well, both at work and at play, and respect each other's differences. They are polite and curious, with a well-developed moral and social sensibility. Discussions with pupils show attitudes and approaches to stand them in good stead for their future lives in

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a multicultural community. Pupils gain good awareness of other countries and cultures through themed weeks. During the inspection it was 'French week', and pupils gained additional enjoyment in those lessons interspersed with the use of French. Pupils' direct links with the local community were seen in the local parish church, where Year 1 artwork and writing were displayed, comparing their church with Lincoln Cathedral. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils show good awareness of their responsibilities as future citizens of the United Kingdom.

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	3
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	2
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?

Improvements in pupils' learning are being secured through the ways teaching methods are being enhanced through curriculum development. Most of the good teaching is in lessons where links between different subjects and skills are established. Teaching tends to be no more than satisfactory where teachers give too much information to the pupils and assessment strategies and questioning are insufficiently effective. Pupils then become passive learners as they are not involved fully in the lesson. Some teachers have yet to transfer, fully, the skills applied successfully in creative lessons across all their practice. Outstanding teaching was seen in the Year 2 literacy and numeracy lessons following a trip to Tattershall Castle. This exemplified the positive ways the school uses trips, visits and visitors to enhance learning for its pupils.

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The school's extended services augment well the opportunities provided for pupils and their families. The breakfast club offers an important service to individual pupils. The good after-school club provides particularly well for working families. The Whaplode Kids' Club fully meets the requirements of its registration and is led and managed well. Pupils clearly enjoy the range of activities provided, and comments on the questionnaires praise the club. The management of the facility by school staff means the good care and support evident throughout the school extend to the club. Consequently, there is a good, inclusive approach across the range of provision.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants, through cooperative planning with class teachers. The special educational needs coordinator has some time each week for monitoring pupils' progress. Individual education plans are in place but are written in adult, rather than pupil-friendly, language. There are good links with support agencies to meet individual needs, and close links with the families of those pupils who may be vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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?

There is good teamwork and cooperation between staff throughout the school. They are working hard to secure improvement. Some important developments have still to have full impact, but improvements are being embedded securely. Curriculum development and the tracking of pupils' progress are helping to secure improved progress and opportunities for all groups of pupils to meet their full academic potential. The good aspects of the pupils' personal development reflect the school's determination to meet their individual needs. Regular monitoring by the headteacher ensures an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. Support for all teaching and support staff is provided where appropriate and excellence recognised and encouraged. As middle leadership is underdeveloped, monitoring, the analysis of data and target setting remain almost entirely the headteacher's responsibility.

Partnership with the governing body is strong, and members are very active in their support for the school. There are close links with subject leaders and governors are timetabled to observe teaching and learning at first hand. The governing body is active in promoting partnerships with pupils' families by organising and actively encouraging workshops and information evenings. Governing body planning has already identified priorities highlighted by the inspection. The governing body has been a key driver of improvement over the last year as the school has worked on its curriculum developments to increase pupils' rate of progress.

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Safeguarding is satisfactory. The governing body is currently updating all safeguarding procedures as part of its review of policies. In practice, pupils feel safe and parents and carers strongly agree that the school is a safe place.

The school has a good approach to community cohesion. School files, press cuttings, letters and comments from the questionnaires confirm the school's success in meeting a wide range of community needs. It is held in high regard both within and beyond its immediate community. As a church school, there is also an important, additional outreach through its broader faith community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class to attain average standards in the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. Children's social development is good, and staff are able to build on this to aid development in other areas of learning. An increasing focus on phonics - the sounds that letters make - is helping to improve attainment in literacy. However, children's own writing and number work are not always displayed to full effect. Planning shows a sound balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. A new outside, covered area is used effectively to enhance Reception activities. The school environment and a new outside classroom are used well as teaching resources. Children enjoyed a tour of the grounds to observe features of autumn. By collecting leaves and twigs, their observational skills were being developed, as well as their general knowledge and understanding. There was additional fun when children sorted and counted conkers and pinecones. Although speaking and listening are encouraged well, the questioning of children to check their understanding is not always focused effectively enough.

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Satisfactory leadership is ensuring cooperative work between teaching and other adult support. Assessment procedures are developing satisfactorily to relate more closely to the children's stages of development. There is good cooperation with Whaplode Kids' Club to support Reception children, although none were using this facility at the time of the inspection. The assessment systems used by both club and school are compatible. Good partnerships with parents and carers have been developed. Communication through the new home-school books is enhancing opportunities to extend learning beyond the school day. Good links are in place with pre-school providers in order to aid transition into school. Parents and carers praise the Reception staff's approach to transition, and the focus on their children's welfare.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers responding to the questionnaire reflect high levels of satisfaction and confidence in the school. The response rate to the questionnaires is above average and the proportion unable to respond to any questions was very low. Parents and carers comment favourably on almost all questions, are appreciative of their partnership with the school and the information and support they are given. Very few expressed a concern about behaviour. The school has its share of pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, but staff respond well to these children. Even among the entirely positive responses, there were some written comments concerning parking outside the school that might put pedestrians at risk. Road markings and signs indicate clearly the school's safety zone. Not all parents and carers respect this zone and, against local authority advice, stop or park within the marked area when bringing or collecting their children from school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whaplode Church of England 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 188 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	79	13	19	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	54	79	13	19	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	72	17	25	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	74	16	24	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	75	15	22	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	69	20	29	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	69	21	31	0	0	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)	44	65	21	31	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	65	22	32	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	54	26	38	0	0	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	71	18	26	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	82	10	15	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	88	6	9	2	3	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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whaplode Church of England Primary School, Spalding, PE12 6TS

We would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and the way you shared with us your experiences of school life. Yours is a satisfactory school.

These are some of the things we found are best about your school.

Your behaviour around school and attitudes to learning are good.

You cooperate well together and are prepared to take responsibility.

Your understanding of the importance of healthy living is good.

You contribute well to the good reputation your school has in the community.

The way your school works with your families to support you is good.

Adults take good care of you, just as you take good care of each other.

Your governing body and headteacher work hard to help you make progress.

We have asked your headteacher, the other teachers and your school's governing body to do three main things to help you achieve even more during your time at school.

We want them to help you gain higher standards by the time you leave in Year 6. You can help here by continuing to work hard in all your subjects.

We want them to help you learn even better through the ways your teachers plan lessons and assess your work and progress. You will find they ask you even more questions in class to check you really understand your work.

We have asked them to complete the work they are doing to help you to make more links between subjects, to use the skills you have learnt, and to challenge and inspire you further.

You may also notice your teachers and the school governors working together even more closely over the next year to achieve all this.

During the Year 5 assembly you sang enthusiastically: 'Let's get together. That's what it's all about. We've got to build it high. Let's stand united. Take challenge in our stride.' You showed us that you can do all this. Please continue to do so as it will really help you all to achieve your best. We wish you all well for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller (on behalf of the team)

Lead inspector

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