

Whitmore Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103685
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355431
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2011
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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	654
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Adams
Headteacher	Karen Skoro
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 40 lessons and 26 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with governing body representatives, teaching and non-teaching staff, and the school council. They attended assemblies, daily registration sessions, looked at pupils' work, and talked with many pupils informally during the inspection. School documents were examined 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 the governing body, and information provided for parents and carers. The monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, in February 2010, was also taken into account. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 146 parents and carers, 20 members of staff and 98 Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- The ways the school has been working since its last inspection in order to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The school's work to ensure a more consistent quality of teaching across the school in order to provide all groups of pupils with suitable challenge and enhance their learning.
- The impact of the school's work to ensure its leaders, at all levels, are involved fully in the monitoring and evaluation of its performance.
- The extent to which the pupils' personal development is an emerging strength of the school in the ways they are prepared for their future lives and well-being.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average sized primary school. The number on roll is rising steadily. The majority of pupils are White British, but pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic groups, the largest minority being from Asian and British Asian backgrounds. Overall, the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language, is well above average. The proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. In the main school, most have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders or moderate learning difficulties. In addition, there is a specialist resource base for up to 12 pupils who have speech, language and communication needs. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has gained Healthy Schools and Eco School status. It holds the Dyslexia Friendly and Basic Skills quality marks. It has gained an International Schools award, and the 'Involve Award' recognising pupils' involvement in and contribution to the school and local community.

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. Since its monitoring visit in February 2010, it has made some significant improvements. The school monitors the performance of its pupils carefully, and this is helping to consolidate the gradual improvements being seen in pupils' progress. Good leadership is ensuring that this approach is reflected across the wide range of the school's monitoring. Consequently, its self-evaluation is accurate. Improvement planning is targeted well on those aspects of teaching and assessment which are required to underpin the pupils' learning and progress. The school has taken a steady, well-considered approach to improvement, to consolidate gains made rather than looking for any quick fix. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory because initiatives have yet to help raise overall attainment above average by Years 2 and 6. However, important systems and approaches to achieve this goal are now embedded securely at both senior and middle leadership levels. Staff teamwork is good.

Data show pupils' rates of progress are accelerating. This results from improving teaching. Higher proportions of pupils are currently on track to make better than expected progress by the end of the academic year. The school is building well from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment on entry is below expectations for children's ages but they make good progress to gain overall average attainment by the time they transfer to Year 1. In recent years, attainment at Key Stage 1 has been improving, at a faster rate than seen nationally, but remains average in tests and assessments by the end of Year 2. In the Year 6 national tests in 2010, attainment was below average overall. However, most pupils made sound progress from their Year 2 starting points. The progress made by the 30% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the further 30% who speak English as an additional language was satisfactory. The progress of the other 40% was good in mathematics and reading but satisfactory in writing.

Improving standards in writing is a key focus for the school. Discussions show that, in the recent past, teachers have lacked confidence in their assessment of writing. This is changing with new assessment systems; a scrutiny of pupils' books shows marking and assessments have become more accurate since the start of the academic year. However, the new systems remain to be implemented fully in order to have sufficient impact in raising standards, particularly by the end of Year 6. There are still some inconsistencies in the ways teachers use assessment information to plan lessons and ensure sufficient challenge for more able pupils. Nevertheless, staff are working together well to share good practice and help raise each other's expertise. The other main area for improvement relates to attendance. This is average overall, but some persistent absentees and holidays taken during term time depress the figures as well as the learning and progress of the pupils concerned.

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The school has two most important strengths. First, the outcomes and provision for pupils in the speech and language resource base are good. Consistently good, specialist teaching helps the pupils make often small but vitally important steps in their progress and development. The confidence gained by pupils in the unit enables them to integrate fully in the mainstream classes they attend. The care provided for such pupils also reflects the excellent care, guidance and support seen across the school. The school's attention to detail for pupils' welfare provides compelling evidence that every child is the subject of very well targeted pastoral support. This also helps underpin well the pupils' good personal development.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, and further accelerate pupils' progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 by ensuring:
 - that the school's developing strategies for the assessment of writing are implemented fully by the end of the academic year to both increase teachers' confidence in moderation and their expertise in marking work
 - a more consistent approach to marking in order to help further pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve
 - good practice in the use of assessment information is shared to help improve lesson planning and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - challenging work is provided for more-able pupils, so they reach the higher levels of attainment by Year 6.
- Work with families of those who are persistent absentees in order to raise attendance rates to the school's target of 95.4%.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Current pupils' work shows their attainment is mainly meeting expectations and is broadly average for their year groups. The very large majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are making at least satisfactory progress. However, pupils' progress is accelerating; in a few lessons, pupils' attainment was above average and they made good progress. This was linked mainly to the 'creative learning' lessons where pupils thoroughly appreciate the links being made between subjects. This approach was particularly effective in Year 1 where some outstanding learning was seen because planning bridged the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 curricula. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils rose very well to the challenge of using more sophisticated English vocabulary and specialist science terminology when writing a science report. In such lessons, pupils are keen to become involved and the good enjoyment seen in most lessons rises to higher levels.

The good progress being made by pupils in the speech and language unit reflects the pupils' active involvement. Great fun was had by Year 4 to 6 pupils when developing their speech and descriptive vocabulary while walking, stamping, skipping and twisting across the room. The use of their 'talking tins' (small individual recording devices) helped the

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pupils to sustain their ideas effectively for descriptive writing as well as being a practical aid in developing their pronunciation and speech patterns.

Pupils respect their teachers, and each other; this contributes well to the school as a harmonious community and pupils accept responsibility readily. Their social and moral development is good. Pupils' good personal development prepares them well for their future lives, and their attitudes in lessons show they value their learning. As one older pupil said, 'You need to get a good education so you can get a good job.' There are good opportunities, through the curriculum, for pupils to practise their enterprise skills. Pupils often gain great pleasure from their work, as when classes of older pupils combined for a music lesson where they sang, exceptionally well and harmoniously, native North American chants. Such opportunities enhance well pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Discussions with pupils show that they have a good appreciation of the lives of others from different backgrounds and challenge any potential bullying or racism. Most pupils adopt healthy lifestyles while at school; pupils' participation in the lunchtime 'walk a mile' activity is good, and they make healthy choices for lunch. However, although attendance is improving, it remains short of the school's targets.

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	2
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?

While the majority of teaching seen was satisfactory, the full range of teaching quality was observed. However, there were more outstanding than inadequate lessons. In weaker

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lessons, teachers tend to talk for too long at the pupils, miss good learning opportunities and provide too little challenge. Informal assessment during lessons is stronger overall than marking and the more formal assessment of pupils' work. When at its best, assessment helps pupils' learning because it provides them with very clear 'next steps'. Marking provides positive feedback on work completed and includes praise but not always sufficient guidance to help pupils to improve. In the most effective lessons, teachers' use of questioning is strong, their planning caters effectively for individuals, and pupils are given good opportunities for developing independent thought and extended writing. There is also effective support from teaching assistants to promote the literacy and language development of pupils with additional learning needs. High expectations are clear in the outstanding lessons as well as appropriately targeted challenge for more-able pupils. There is consistently good teaching and assessment in the specialist unit because pupils are challenged constantly to think, respond and participate. Purposeful dialogue not only helps the physical development of pupils' speech but also enhances well levels of confidence set to support them in their future lives.

Pupils find the curriculum interesting and fun as it appeals increasingly to their interests. It is also enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular activities; uptake by pupils is high. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum, including through residential trips in Year 6. Good use is made of specialist teaching in areas such as drama, sport and music. The curriculum is becoming matched increasingly well to individual pupils' needs and so improves their progress. The new internet learning platform has been received well by pupils, parents and carers, and provides regular opportunities for supporting learning at home.

Care and guidance are outstanding because pupils are known very well as individuals. Their personal and welfare needs are assessed carefully because of good pastoral support. The monitoring and support of individual pupils is rigorous and leads to very effectively targeted help being provided for both pupils and their families. Provision for different groups of pupils is planned and evaluated very well by the inclusion manager; pupils and their teachers are involved very fully in these processes. Partnerships are effective and their impact is evaluated robustly and regularly. There is very effective support for pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. This is also helping to drive the improving progress of such pupils.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

There is strong teamwork at the school. This is because middle and senior leaders share a clear vision and common drive to ensure that all pupils have good and equal access to learning. The school is focused well on ensuring that the improvements in pupils' progress already achieved are maintained. To this end, middle leaders are involved fully in the monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum. They work cooperatively alongside an advanced skills teacher colleague to provide, where needed, additional support and training. Consequently, strategies have been identified which have already improved teaching and learning in key areas, and which are now focused well on pupils' writing. As a result of good leadership, and an inclusive approach, gaps in performance by pupils and their peers nationally have been closing. Pupils' learning and welfare are also supported well through partnerships with external agencies, such as local authority consultants, speech therapists and translators.

Governance is satisfactory because the governing body is in the relatively early days of building links with subjects and year groups. However, they are kept up to date through the good quality reports they receive from the headteacher. The safeguarding of children is secured well. Relevant policies and procedures have all been agreed, embedded and are reviewed regularly. All staff receive appropriate training which is kept fully up to date. Records are very comprehensive and well-organised. The school has many good partnerships. Those with appropriate agencies for child protection are excellent. The international and local awards the school has received are confirmation of its good contribution to community cohesion. The school has considered well its responsibilities within its community, has identified how it may improve its role, taken action and evaluated its impact. It is now looking to develop further its international links to broaden pupils' view of their world.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. However, as in the main school, achievement in writing is not as strong as other areas of learning. Nevertheless, there is an improving picture of achievement in children's communication, language and literacy development overall. Good teaching and good planning foster good levels of independence. Children show great curiosity in their surroundings and the activities on offer. This was seen in a good Reception lesson where the children thoroughly enjoyed sharing their observations of the ways frogspawn turned into tadpoles. They not only counted the days it took, but were also challenged effectively by exploring 'camouflage' in addition to producing well-observed drawings. In this way, learning was made relevant. Children enjoy taking responsibility, for example helping to wash up after snack time. Their speech and language develop well because working relationships are good and they have confidence in talking with adults. There is a good balance of adult- and child-initiated activities. Planning is matched carefully to individual pupils' needs and is based securely on regular and comprehensive assessments. Outdoor and indoor provision both provide good opportunities for children to develop and extend their learning across all six areas of the Early Learning Goals. Working relationships with parents and carers are strong and promote children's learning. Good leadership has ensured strong teamwork which is much focused on promoting children's learning and welfare.

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

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was broadly average. The very large majority responding, and those with whom inspectors talked at the school gates, are very happy with the school. Parents and carers are particularly positive when they say their children enjoy school. The inspection findings reflect these views and those of others when they say the school keeps their children safe and healthy. A few parents and carers felt the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There are a few pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour consistently well throughout the day; adults support such pupils well. Other pupils show due tolerance and understanding. A few parents and carers feel the school takes insufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. The school seeks parents' and carers' views on a regular basis, both formally and informally. School records show it analyses, evaluates and takes appropriate action to remedy or meet any concerns. As one

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parent or carer wrote, 'The school works very closely with parents to give support in any way it can.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitmore Park 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 654 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	60	52	36	4	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	92	63	51	35	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	74	51	63	43	9	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	44	68	47	12	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	74	51	64	44	7	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	51	60	41	11	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	42	73	50	10	7	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)	55	38	75	51	8	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	43	67	46	9	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	38	67	46	12	8	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	36	71	49	13	9	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	58	40	69	47	12	8	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	54	58	40	8	5	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.



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitmore Park Primary School, Coventry CV6 2HG

Yours is a satisfactory school. As you know, your school motto is, 'Together we can do it!', and when we listened to what you and your teachers had to say about life at your school, we understand your determination to do well and ensure it quickly becomes a good school. We appreciated very much your politeness, your interest and the ways you helped to include us in your everyday life and work.

These are the things we found are best about you and your school.

You receive a good start to your education in Nursery and Reception classes.

You behave well and know how to keep each other safe at school.

You have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living.

You make a good contribution to the school and wider community.

Your school works well with others, including your families, to help you learn.

Your headteacher and your other senior teachers lead your school well.

We have asked your teachers to do some extra things to help all of you make better progress and attain higher levels in your work. First, they will be developing further the ways they mark and assess your work, especially your writing. They will be giving you additional help and advice so you can be sure of what you need to do to improve. Your teachers will be sharing their ideas and the information they gain from marking and assessing your work. This is to improve the ways they plan lessons in order to help you make that extra progress. Those of you who are more able, or find learning easier, will be given an added element of challenge in your work.

You can all help with the second important improvement. We know you enjoy school and understand the importance of coming to school every day in order to ensure you learn well. Your school is working very hard with some of your families to encourage improved attendance. Please continue to support your school by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller

Lead inspector

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