

Whitchurch CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123514
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359454
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Rylands
Headteacher	Diana West
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 28 lessons and observed 12 teachers teach. They also held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, and representatives of the governing body and staff, including the headteacher. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. The responses to the 71 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed, as were the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

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

- How well are pupils currently in the school doing, and are teaching and the curriculum good enough to accelerate achievement and raise standards?
- Do pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, and does teachers' marking help them in this?
- How effective are the programmes to support the learning and personal development of pupils who might find learning difficult?
- Are all leaders and managers clear about what the school needs to do to improve, and what impact have they had on pupils' progress this year?

Information about the school

This school is larger than average. It has an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include both learning and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The greatest majority of these pupils are from other white, mainly Polish, backgrounds.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2010. Since that time there has been a large turnover of staff, including a completely new leadership team. The school holds gold Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark, and it has its own breakfast club. The Spangles Club, a privately run before- and after-school club, operates on the school site. It is inspected separately.

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 school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Following several changes in staffing at the start of this school year, the headteacher has established a shared vision for improvement across the school. She has given the school clear educational direction, based on accurate self-evaluation that recognises the need to accelerate pupils' progress and help them reach higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics. The school has used external consultants, including from the local authority, and links with and visits to other schools wisely to raise staff awareness of how to do this.

The leadership team has worked hard to foster teamwork amongst the staff, and to raise their awareness of their individual and collective responsibility for the outcomes by Year 6. However, all staff do not subscribe equally well to this. Teaching and progress, although satisfactory overall, are uneven across the school and within different year groups. This is because governors and staff with subject responsibilities are not consistently effective in checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning, or in ensuring that basic skills are promoted at every opportunity. Expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough, and teaching does not always build sufficiently on pupils' prior learning. Therefore, pupils' work is not always well enough matched to their different levels of ability. In some classes, over-directed learning and the over-use of worksheets limit pupils' progress, as does the narrow range of questioning used by some teachers. All of this prevents pupils from writing at length, and from becoming more independent and responsible for their own learning.

Since the previous inspection, pupils have been given targets, but they are not always in language pupils understand, and marking rarely refers to them. Good marking occurs in some year groups, mostly in English, but it is not consistent across the school, and pupils are not always secure enough about how to improve their work. Systems for tracking and improving pupils' progress, and for monitoring and improving teaching, are well enough established to secure at least satisfactory progress. They are being used increasingly well by the leadership team to challenge pupils and staff to do better. Taken together, all of the above demonstrates the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Pupils start Year 3 with average levels of attainment, and attainment is in line with the national average when they leave. Therefore, achievement is satisfactory, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Data in school, and work seen in pupils' books point to better overall progress since last September than in previous years. The focus on improving pupils' calculation skills is paying off in mathematics as is the approach to solving real life mathematical problems. These moves are motivating pupils and increasing their progress.

Pupils enjoy school, they behave well and their attendance is above average. The support provided for pupils with behavioural difficulties, and those whose circumstances might

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make them more vulnerable, aids their learning and enables lessons to continue without disruption. The school uses its good links with external agencies to help it in this. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy and their parents and carers recognise this too. These aspects of learning are built into the overall satisfactory curriculum, and are underpinned by the good pastoral care and support provided for all pupils.

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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects
 - ensuring targets are in language pupils understand, and that they are reviewed regularly with the pupils
 - achieving consistency in marking so that it reflects pupils' targets and shows pupils the steps they need to take to reach them
 - developing in pupils the independence and confidence they need to take their learning forward by themselves.
- In all year groups, increase the amount of teaching that is good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and increasing the pace of learning in lessons
 - ensuring teachers use questioning more effectively to include all pupils and, where relevant, to re-shape learning during lessons
 - ensuring that pupils' work more closely matches their different ability levels and provides the challenge needed to accelerate their progress, especially that of the more-able pupils.
- Ensure that all those with responsibilities, from governors through to subject interest holders, fulfil their roles in improving the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that basic skills are promoted at every opportunity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make less than expected progress in writing in Years 3 and 4, and, while progress improves in Years 5 and 6, overall it is only satisfactory. Spelling is relatively weak throughout the school, and written work is not always presented well because handwriting is not always neat or legible enough. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of writing skills and have a developing sense of audience, purpose and style. They do not do enough writing to use and extend these skills. This is because they too often have to add sentences to pictures, complete worksheets, or cut and stick information from worksheets into their books. This loses valuable learning time in lessons, and limits pupils' overall progress, as was evident in some Year 3 literacy sessions on non-chronological report writing. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in

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learning to speak English and, as the school's data show, in some years, they make faster overall progress than other pupils.

Pupils' increasing enjoyment of mathematics is helping their progress. For example, Year 6 pupils were highly enthused by having to work out which mobile phone company was offering the best deal. More-able pupils were challenged well in this lesson as they worked out what the best deal was likely to be in the short, medium and longer term. Overall, however, more-able pupils do not always make the faster progress of which they are capable, because they are not always given challenging enough work to do. Boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils for whom English is an additional language all make satisfactory progress. Support staff help them in this during lessons and, when necessary, in small groups away from the classroom to ensure they acquire basic skills. Pupils acquire satisfactory information and communication technology skills, which they use satisfactorily to support their work in writing and in mathematics.

Pupils are polite and friendly. Proud of their work and of their school, they readily talk to adults, including visitors, about them. Pupils feel safe in school. They state confidently that staff will always help them should they have any concerns. They understand what constitutes bullying and report that 'all falling out is sorted' and they 'work hard to make [the school] a good place'. Most of their parents and carers agree with this. Pupils talk about how they can 'grow in our school' and say that 'learning is fun' and 'quite good', referring particularly to science experiments and solving problems in mathematics. While they know they have targets for writing and mathematics, not all are confident about what those targets are or how they will know when they have reached them. Pupils make healthy eating choices. Large numbers participate wholeheartedly in the many sporting and exercise activities available to them in and beyond the normal school day.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They accept responsibility willingly, and are becoming increasingly involved in helping to improve their school. They are reflective and caring, and, through their work in religious education, they are becoming increasingly aware of different faiths and cultures at home and abroad. Overall, however, this is the least developed aspect of their personal development. Taking all of this alongside the pupils' good attendance and satisfactory basic skills, pupils leave the school adequately prepared for the future.

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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?

The quality of teaching seen in lessons ranged from good to inadequate. Where it is good, teachers use their secure subject knowledge well to question pupils and increase the pace of their learning. At other times, questioning is too narrow and does not involve all pupils, and lessons proceed too slowly to ensure adequate learning. This happens especially when pupils have to cut out worksheets and stick them in their books, as some Year 3 pupils did in literacy sessions on non-chronological report writing. Pupils' books demonstrate a better understanding, for example, of literary, scientific and historical concepts, when they have had the opportunity to write more freely about what they have learned, than when they have had to complete worksheets or add captions to pictures. In lessons, teachers sometimes talk for too long, or over-direct pupils' work, therefore limiting the time pupils have to show what they have learned. Few teachers are really skilled at adapting pupils' work during a lesson in response to how well pupils are doing at any given time. This was nevertheless done well in the good mathematics lesson referred to earlier in this report.

Pupils work and play in a safe, secure and welcoming learning environment, where they know that they are valued as individuals and their views count. Good pastoral care, which includes a well-attended breakfast club, ensures pupils' good personal development and well-being, and contributes to their satisfactory progress. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, has a positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour, and

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consequently on their learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' health, safety and well-being effectively. It is under review to help pupils understand better how to use 'the toolbox' of skills they acquire in one subject to help them in another. As a result, pupils are beginning to recognise, for example, that they 'can make a story' linking art and English, but the promotion of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in all subjects is not fully established.

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?

The headteacher has worked tirelessly since her appointment to bring about improvement in all aspects of the school's work. Supported by the leadership team, she has bit by bit embedded in most staff the ambition and drive to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards. The priorities in the school development plan are the right ones, and they provide a clear way forward in the drive to accelerate improvement. Staff have worked together well to establish ways of assessing, tracking and improving pupils' learning accurately. The relatively new systems are beginning to be used effectively to hold staff to account for how well their pupils are doing, for example, through regular meetings to discuss individual pupils' progress. This is helping to establish a whole school view of the progress required in each year group to ensure the best outcomes for pupils by the time they are in Year 6. Challenging targets have been set for pupils and staff to bring this about. However, not all staff with responsibilities are as effective in securing improvement and promoting basic skills in different subjects as they might be.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses but it relies heavily on the headteacher for information. Its role in holding the school to account for its outcomes is relatively underdeveloped. The school seeks and acts on the views of parents and carers, and the vast majority of parents and carers feel it communicates with them well. The school's good partnerships with other schools and external agencies assist pupils as they transfer from one phase of education to the next, and, where relevant, support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Everything the school has to offer is open to all pupils, but progress is uneven throughout the school and not all pupils regularly make the progress of which they are capable. The school understands its own context and that of the community it serves. Its work to raise pupils' awareness of different communities nationally and globally, though satisfactory overall, is less well developed. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Clear policies and procedures lead to well-managed, good quality risk assessments. The school site is safe

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and secure, all relevant training is up to date, and the vetting of adults working with pupils is recorded well. The school now plans to involve pupils and their parents and carers in the review and development of safeguarding procedures.

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

Views of parents and carers

Representing just over a fifth of parents and carers, the return from the inspection questionnaire was smaller than in most schools. It, and discussions with parents and carers during the inspection, showed that most are satisfied with what the school does for their children. Comments such as 'every child is equal' and children 'are very happy at this school' were typical of many received, along with praise for how the school helps pupils with any sort of difficulty. Several comments were also received from parents and carers voicing concern at the way the school manages pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying. The inspection team investigated this thoroughly and found that behaviour is good and the school deals properly with any incident of poor behaviour, including what might be regarded as bullying.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitchurch CofE Junior 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	45	37	52	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	51	34	48	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	42	39	55	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	31	44	62	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	48	37	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	37	40	56	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	37	43	61	1	1	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)	30	42	36	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	38	40	56	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	27	42	59	7	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	25	46	65	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	38	35	49	5	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	41	37	52	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



30 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitchurch CofE Junior School, Whitchurch, SY13 1RX

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly to your school. It was a real delight to talk to you about your work. As you know, we came to see how well you were all doing. Your good attendance shows that you enjoy school and want to be there, and we noted that you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You told us that you trust the staff to help you should you have any concerns, and we saw that your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. We were particularly impressed with your good manners when you spoke to us or helped us find our way around the school. We found that the school cares for you well and does much to support all aspects of your personal development.

Overall, we judged your school to be satisfactory. We have asked it to prioritise some of the things it has already identified as necessary to help you make faster progress and reach higher standards. They are to:

- help you make faster progress in writing and mathematics, give you more opportunities to do longer pieces of writing, ensure you understand your targets and how to reach them, and help you to see for yourselves how you can improve your own learning
- make sure that you are all taught equally well, and that your work is at the right level for each one of you so you can make the best possible progress
- ensure that all those with responsibilities, from governors through to those responsible for subjects, fulfil their roles in improving teaching and learning.

You can help by continuing to work hard, by checking your work, and by trying to find ways of improving it by yourselves. We hope that by doing these things, the school will help you to enjoy learning even more as you develop the range of skills you will need to face the world in which you are growing up.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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