

# Whitby, Airy Hill Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121345
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358994
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Vicky Millson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jim Lidgley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Waterstead Lane Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 1PZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, governors and staff. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: assessments of pupils' progress; the school's monitoring of teaching and learning; attendance data and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team analysed questionnaires returned from staff and pupils, and 90 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which pupils of all abilities are challenged, challenge themselves and work independently; and the impact of these factors on their progress.
- The effectiveness with which teachers use assessment to plan what pupils are taught and to involve pupils in assessing their learning.
- Whether care, support and guidance are of high quality and have a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

## Information about the school

Airy Hill Community Primary School is a similar size to the average primary school. It serves a largely urban community in the seaside town of Whitby. Half the pupils come from outside the catchment area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. Around 30% of pupils are vulnerable because of their circumstances or their learning or behavioural difficulties. An above-average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The local Sure Start Children's Centre runs an outreach centre at the school for parents with pre-school children. A third of staff has changed within the past two years. The school is part of the national pilot scheme 'A Chance to Talk'.

**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

This is a good school. It has three outstanding elements. Pupils' behaviour is first rate and is a key factor in their successful learning. Pupils are given excellent care, support and guidance. As a result, they develop into confident, independent and articulate young people with a keen sense of social responsibility, well-prepared for their future lives. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are outstanding and are the main driving force behind the school's rapid improvement in the last two years.

The school knows itself well. It is led and managed well and governors are fully involved in school improvement. Self-evaluation is stringent and pinpoints the right areas to improve. As a result, all aspects of the school's work are now good. There are considerable improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, the extent to which all pupils are challenged and the increasingly effective use of assessment to accelerate pupils' learning. However, the school has identified that, at present, the way teachers mark work and use assessments of pupils' learning to plan what they teach varies from outstanding to satisfactory. The mutual respect that staff and pupils have for each other means that teaching and learning is a two-way process in most lessons, with pupils actively involved in their learning, making independent decisions and challenging themselves. The school sets and meets challenging targets, thus demonstrating its good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils make good progress from generally below and sometimes well below average starting points because they are well-taught. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning rapidly from stimulating learning activities that challenge them to work things out for themselves. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1 where teaching quality is largely satisfactory or better. However, learning activities are a bit too formal too soon for lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 and teachers miss opportunities to develop early writing skills to the full. Pupils make rapid progress in Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching is good and often outstanding. Attainment in English and mathematics is currently above average in Years 3 to 6 but has yet to be sustained at this level over time.

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

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 by:
  - – extending the good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 so as to meet fully the needs of lower-attaining pupils
  - – giving pupils a variety of methods to record their written work other than on whiteboards so that their writing skills are developed to the full.

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- Ensure marking and assessment across the school are as effective as the best practice evident in several classes so as to sustain above-average attainment.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and achieve well. Lessons are lively, often involving pupils in paired discussions or group work. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils ask questions and make points without raising their hands for attention because they know how to listen to each other. Pupils have lots of practice in skim-reading information and telling each other what they recall. This develops their memory and speaking skills. Pupils say, 'The work is hard at first and then it gets easier. Teachers tell stories to help you remember. It's a better way of learning and makes it fun.'

Attainment is above average in Years 3 to 6 because pupils are taught to check their work against agreed 'top tips' and to analyse what they need to do to improve it. More-able pupils forge ahead because the work stretches their understanding. Average-attainers have a 'can do' attitude and are not afraid to ask for help. Lower-attaining pupils confirm that individual tuition for mathematics 'lets us choose which method is best for us and then we can practise the one we really understand.' This contrasts with the way pupils work in Years 1 and 2 where lessons are more teacher-directed. Lower-attainers in Year 1 sometimes struggle because they find it hard to concentrate without frequent periods of activity. Key Stage 1 pupils do a lot of writing on whiteboards but do not learn to form their letters well enough to help them write quickly and easily on paper. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils write well. They know how to vary sentence lengths for impact and use figurative language effectively. They read well because their reading is guided each day and includes different reading materials which include newspapers. Attainment is above average in mathematics because pupils have a firm grasp of basic techniques and apply these well to solve mathematical problems. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they have good support in lessons and have equal opportunities to participate.

Pupils' above-average attendance and outstanding behaviour are key factors in their good achievement. Pupils grin, saying, 'We're noisy but not naughty!' They feel valued and consider they make a difference to the school community. For example, members of the eco-council explained, 'Our role is to raise awareness of how to save the planet,' which they are currently doing through recycling and saving water. Pupils are energetic, health-conscious and feel safe at school. They say there is no bullying, 'just normal falling out' and respect that some pupils have challenging behaviour. Links with other schools give them a good understanding of diverse communities and cultural traditions.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, teachers fully involve pupils in setting targets and checking their learning. They use assessment extremely well to plan what to teach so as to challenge all pupils, tackle misconceptions and aid rapid progress. Good features in lessons include skilful questioning, clear explanations and good use of teaching assistants. Learning slows when teachers' expectations do not match pupils' capabilities which is why lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 struggle at times. Over-use of whiteboards and printed materials restricts pupils' opportunities to develop good early writing skills. Marking and assessment procedures vary. Pupils' learning accelerates when they are given clear, detailed steps for improvement, such as 'Link sentences with firstly or next, try not to use then', but slows when they are unsure what to correct.

The curriculum makes good provision for literacy and numeracy and offers a breadth of interesting and relevant experiences. A good range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and visitors further enhances pupils' learning. The curriculum in Year 1 does not take sufficiently into account pupils' learning needs given that about a third are below expected levels at the end of the Reception year. The curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is enriched by weekly target-setting and review sessions and regular opportunities to discuss local, national and international issues.

Pupils thrive because they are known as individuals. They are cared for exceptionally well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or behavioural difficulties make

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good progress because of the expert support they receive. Outstanding support for vulnerable pupils ensures they make the most of what the school has to offer them. As a result, attendance rates have gone up, holiday absences have substantially reduced with a marked impact on pupils' achievements.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team sets high expectations. The success of its ambitious and innovative strategies is now being realised in pupils' good progress and above-average attainment. This has been achieved through exceptionally effective monitoring of teaching and learning, leading to much outstanding practice, especially with regard to involving pupils in setting challenges and improving their work. Teachers work together, learning from each other in this climate of mutual support, where expertise is shared and ideas trialled to determine which are the most effective. As a result, staff morale is high. The school is well aware of where its weaknesses lie and has suitable plans to ensure learning is highly successful across the school in due course. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities; as a result, gaps between learners are closing. The school tackles discrimination very effectively.

Governors are knowledgeable and actively involved in ensuring the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils. They challenge and support the school in order to help bring about improvements. Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements. The school's good quality assurance and risk assessment systems, including child protection, provide a safe learning environment. The school integrates issues about safety and safeguarding into the curriculum and so pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from threats such as cyber bullying.' Good partnerships with parents and carers, and with a range of agencies, institutions and providers, contribute well to pupils' good achievement. The school promotes community cohesion well through close links with British and African schools which serve culturally and racially-diverse communities. It has yet to evaluate the impact of these links on pupils' achievement.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills. They spend much of the day exploring and investigating purposefully both independently and in groups. Adults intervene at just the right moment to extend and challenge children's learning. For example, armed with clip boards, tweezers and magnifying glasses, the children began their task of searching for small creatures and ticked their record sheets as they identified each one. Levels of concentration were high as they worked co-operatively, lifting up logs and examining the ground. Adults extended children's language through skilful questioning, carefully recording their learning through annotated notes and photographs.

Indoor and outdoor activities are equally absorbing and thought-provoking. Activities are planned to take children's interests into account and consequently children are motivated to learn and actively participate in writing and number tasks. These develop basic literacy and numeracy skills almost without children realising it. Short, adult-led sessions are very successful because focussed teaching stretches the more-able yet fully includes the least-able. For example, from counting out loud together, forwards and back, more-able children learnt to count in their heads in a game which absorbed lower-attainers because it involved noisy farmyard animals. Children are cared for well. By the end of the Reception year, two-thirds of children are working within expected levels for their age.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed positive views about the school. Several commented that it is, 'A friendly, caring school' that 'gives children the confidence to have a go even if you do make a mistake.' The inspection team saw many examples of this. A very small minority expressed concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and whether pupils read as well as they should. The inspection team judges behaviour to be outstanding. Pupils work hard, listen intently and know when to laugh and when to concentrate. Those who have behavioural problems are taught very effective strategies to help them to cope. Other pupils show exceptional maturity in understanding those with behavioural difficulties. The inspection team found that pupils read accurately and with good understanding for their age.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitby, Airy Hill 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 215 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	61	33	37	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	68	28	31	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	58	37	41	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	56	33	37	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	56	39	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	50	40	44	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	57	36	40	3	3	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)	43	48	41	46	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	51	41	46	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	42	36	40	7	8	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	42	43	48	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	53	32	36	3	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	66	28	31	1	1	1	1

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Whitby, Airy Hill Community Primary School, Whitby, YO21 1PZ**

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. A special 'thank you' goes to the four groups of pupils who spent time talking to us and showing us their work. You go to a good school. It is improving rapidly and has three outstanding elements. Your behaviour is excellent. Your school takes exceptionally good care of you and gives you a great deal of help. Your headteacher and teachers have put enormous effort into making sure lessons interest and challenge you and involve you in checking your learning. This is excellent too because it is why your attainment is above-average now in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

You told us that lessons are fun and that you learn a lot and we agree with you. However, there are two things which we have asked your school to do to make it better still.

- We noticed that pupils in year 1 struggle a bit because they need to learn in a similar way to those in the Reception class. So we have asked your teachers to make some changes. We have also asked Key Stage 1 teachers to make sure that pupils write on different things other than whiteboards because they need to practise their writing skills.
- We looked at lots of your work and found that the way teachers mark your work varies. Your teachers are working on this so they all give you the most helpful advice they can.

We hope you enjoy these new challenges. You can help by continuing to come to school every day and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Clark

Lead inspector

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