

Whitecrest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103922
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355490
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Morris
Headteacher	Linda Deeley
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2007
School address	Whitecrest Great Barr, Birmingham B43 6HQ
Telephone number	0121 3586348
Fax number	0121 3578706
Email address	headteacher@whitecrest.sandwell.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 19 lessons taught by eight teachers and one higher level teaching assistant. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 83 parents and carers.

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

- Are assessments of pupils' progress providing a sufficiently secure basis for the school's leaders to accurately evaluate its performance and identify priorities for improvement?
- How well are the most-able pupils challenged in Years 1 and 2 and in English in Years 3 to 6?
- To what extent does the school provide pupils with opportunities to learn about the lives of people with backgrounds different from their own?

Information about the school

The school is of average size. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. There have been significant changes since the school was last inspected. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background has increased, rising from a quarter to around a half; the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has also risen. A new headteacher has been appointed together with a new deputy headteacher and three new teachers. The school shares its site with Whitecrest Playgroup, which is not managed by the governing body and so is subject to a separate inspection.

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 where pupils achieve outstandingly well. They join the Reception class with levels of attainment that are as expected for their age. Good teaching and a curriculum that is well matched to most pupils' needs ensure that the very large majority make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Attainment is high in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. The headteacher has ensured that all teachers are aware of pupils' capabilities, so they are able to set appropriately demanding work, including for the most able. The progress of the few pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but variable, being outstanding for some but too slow for others. This variability is associated with inconsistent use of the accurate data available, so some pupils do not receive the specific targeted support required to make good progress.

Most other outcomes are good. Pupils feel exceptionally safe. They know that there are several identified staff who they can turn to with any problems. They are outstandingly knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet and coping with traffic. Every parent and carer responding to the questionnaire was convinced that the school keeps their children safe, which agrees with inspectors' views. Pupils behave well because the expectation that they will be considerate of others, both in and out of the classroom, is enforced consistently. They get on well with one another and there is a great deal of mutual respect between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and are proud of their achievements. Their views on learning and how the school can be improved are valued and acted upon by staff. Their engagement with the local and wider community is much more limited. In particular, they have too few opportunities to understand the diversity of the United Kingdom by engaging with those from backgrounds different from their own, or to find out how others live their lives. By the time pupils leave Year 6 they are self-confident, independent and well equipped with the skills they will need in later life.

Strong impetus for school improvement comes from a headteacher who inspires the staff. Morale is very high, as shown by the completely positive response to the staff questionnaire. The strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained, and others are now evident. Attendance has improved, for example, and is now high. Managers at all levels play a good role in checking the quality of what the school provides. As a result, the school's leaders, including members of the governing body, have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs by ensuring that data from assessments are used consistently in monitoring progress and planning suitable support.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to find out more about the diversity of the United Kingdom by engaging with the local community and people from backgrounds different from their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. They find learning fun and want to achieve as well as they can. In lessons they quickly settle to their tasks and concentrate for extended periods, although for the younger pupils this is better in the mornings than afternoons. Pupils are keen to take part in discussions and answer questions. They prefer to have a go and risk an incorrect answer rather than not try at all. Pupils particularly enjoy challenging tasks that involve solving problems. From the outset, in Years 1 and 2, the most-able pupils are given appropriately demanding work. Year 1 pupils, for example, had to add the value of menu items and work out what money they would need to pay for it, before going on to calculate the smallest number of coins they could use. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching level 3 has risen significantly. This high level of challenge continues in Years 3 to 6. In English, for example, the proportion reaching level 5 by the time they leave school is now well-above average. Pupils use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in other subjects. Attainment in ICT is equally as high as that in English and mathematics.

Those pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, whereas their progress in mathematics is satisfactory. The reasons for the difference have been analysed well and the school's leaders are already taking action to improve pupils' understanding of the vocabulary used in mathematics so that they can make more rapid progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Above-

- average numbers of pupils choose to eat the well-balanced school meals and pupils are well aware of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils' moral and social development are strong. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and play an effective role in drawing up guidelines for how the school should operate in order to promote good behaviour and learning. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of the arts, but their knowledge and understanding of cultures different from their own is more limited.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and promote a good pace of learning in lessons. Information from assessment is well used, for example regrouping pupils during a lesson when faster or slower progress than expected is identified. Pupils are also involved in their own assessment. For example, pupils are given the responsibility of choosing when to move on to a more difficult task, which improves their independence. Work is usually very well matched to the pupils' differing abilities although, on occasion, the teacher is slow to move the class from the introduction to such tasks. Teachers make good use of ICT to enthuse pupils, and set many tasks in a problem solving context, which pupils enjoy.

The academic curriculum builds well on what most pupils already know, understand and can do. It is adapted well for most groups, although the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is sometimes not as well matched to their needs. This is because the progress meetings, where the reasons for underachievement are identified, do not always specify exactly what support they require and this is left to individual class teachers. The result is variation in quality of support and the subsequent progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The deployment of a specialist ICT teaching assistant to teach lessons in the subject means that pupils frequently learn new skills or apply their existing ones to new situations, resulting in rapid progress in the subject. A wide range of extra clubs and activities is available, well supported by pupils.

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Good emphasis is placed on teaching pupils how to live healthy lives, with comprehensive topics on how to remain safe.

Almost all parents and carers praise the quality of support provided. The school is welcoming and successfully encourages pupils to take a pride in all that they do. The personal and social educational programme is built on in other subjects, such as English and science, and is reinforced through assemblies. Together, these underpin pupils' moral and social development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Good progress has been made since the school was last inspected as a result of the good leadership provided by the headteacher, her deputy and the assistant headteacher. The disruption caused by staffing changes has been managed well in order to limit the impact on pupils' education. All staff are keen to take responsibility and to help drive the school forward. Pupils' progress is tracked accurately and the results used well to identify priorities for improvement. The plans to address these priorities are well focused, but do not always contain criteria against which their success can be measured. The progress of different groups is also tracked in detail and in most cases results in effective action to reduce gaps in performance and promote equality. These data, together with the results of checks on teaching, ensure that the school's own evaluation of its performance is accurate and that all teachers know how their lessons can be further improved. The rare events of racist name-calling are tackled well by rigorously following up and reporting any incidents. Governance is good. Members of the governing body are well informed and have good oversight of the school's performance. They ensure the school meets its statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding. The school goes beyond its legal requirements by placing a particularly strong emphasis on e-safety and road safety.

Good partnerships are maintained with specialist agencies to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A satisfactory audit of pupils' needs in terms of community cohesion has been carried out, with suitable plans for improvement. Visitors are used well to promote pupils' understanding of and respect for the diversity of the local community, but there are no links with schools where they could directly engage with other pupils in different circumstances. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard and are very supportive. They are welcomed in school and kept up to date through satisfactory annual reports. The 'parent voice' group is particularly effective in ensuring that parents have a

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say in how the school can improve. The Parent Teacher Association has been responsible for refurbishing the library to a high standard and for purchasing additional resources that the school would otherwise be unable to afford.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the Reception class and start Year 1 with attainment that is above average. The consistent encouragement to read and write that children receive ensures that progress in these areas is particularly good. Each lesson provides children with a wide range of opportunities to learn at a pace that is well suited to their needs. Lessons are planned in great detail to build on what children already know, understand and can do, with a careful choice of resources that promote good learning. One notable feature of lessons is the clear guidance that children are given. They are reminded, for example, about what is expected in their writing, such as finger spaces and full stops, so that the children can check their own work to see if they have been successful. These criteria provide a good degree of challenge for even the most-able children. Children have plenty of opportunities to plan activities, although relatively few of these relate to investigating things for themselves. There is a high ratio of adults to children, so all have lots of opportunities for individual support and guidance. All adults know their roles very well. Teachers' assessments are accurate, but teaching assistants play only a limited role in assessing children's progress.

The Reception class is well led by an experienced and enthusiastic manager who is ensuring that provision goes from strength to strength. Staff are well trained and qualified. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's education and the quality of welfare provided. Learning journals are comprehensive, although they are not

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sent home for parents to see. In other respects, parents and carers are kept well informed of all matters pertaining to their children, who very much enjoy coming to school.

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

Parents and carers are very pleased indeed with all that the school provides. They hold views that closely match those of the inspectors. There were almost no negative comments received, and those that were made fell into no particular pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitecrest 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	73	21	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	77	19	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	64	30	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	57	31	37	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	69	25	30	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	55	34	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	69	25	30	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)	41	49	39	47	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	53	36	43	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	57	30	36	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	49	36	43	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	66	25	30	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	71	23	28	1	1	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitecrest Primary School, Birmingham, B43 6HQ

Many thanks for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We found you to be polite, welcoming and well behaved. You work hard and are good at using your own initiative. You told us that you were proud of your school and how well you learn. We agree with you. You go to a good school where you progress well and leave with results that are much higher than we usually see. This is outstanding achievement. Some of you who find learning difficult do not make as much progress as others. We have asked your teachers to find out what will help each of you learn more quickly and then give you the extra support you need to do as well as all the others.

Your attendance is better than in most other schools, because you enjoy your lessons and get on so well with one another. Your teachers know that you like solving problems and tackling difficult work, so they make sure that you get lots of chances to do so in lessons. Your computer skills are very impressive because you get to use them so often. You have exceptional understanding about how to stay safe on the internet and in other situations, such as crossing the road or riding your bicycles. You also feel very safe because all the adults in school take good care of you and you know that they will take seriously any worries that you may have. You do not know as much as we expected about the different people who live in the local community and the United Kingdom. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to learn about and work with people in the local community and beyond.

Your school is getting better all the time because all the staff are as happy at school as you are and want you to have the best possible education. Your headteacher and the others who help her to run the school know what needs doing and have good plans in place to make it an even better school.

With all best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll
Lead inspector

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