

Whittington CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116856
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	363859
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Newell
Headteacher	Gary Richards
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
School address	Whittington Worcester WR5 2QZ
Telephone number	01905 354844
Fax number	01905 350868
Email address	office@whittington.worcs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, planning and monitoring files and samples of pupils' work. They also considered responses to 92 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.

- Are pupils making similar rates of progress in each key stage?
- Is progress in mathematics as good as it is in English?
- How well are middle managers involved in whole school improvement?

Information about the school

The school is of broadly average size for a primary school. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and none is at the early stages of learning English. About one in eight pupils is identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is a below average proportion. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a small number have severe learning difficulties. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Attainment is as expected on entry to Reception. It is above average on entry into Year 1 and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils apply their English and information and communications technology (ICT) skills well across the curriculum but are less confident in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Those with the most severe learning difficulties achieve well because excellent individual support very effectively identifies and caters for their personal and educational needs. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good and they show high levels of interest, independence and perseverance when lessons are sufficiently challenging. Attendance is above average.

Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in key stages 1 and 2. The best lessons strike a good balance between instruction and independent learning. Less effective learning occurs when teachers talk for too long or do not sufficiently explain and support independent tasks. The curriculum is good. Provision for music is outstanding. All pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments and perform in a variety of ensembles. This adds greatly to their enjoyment of school and their approach to learning in general. Opportunities for healthy active pursuits are good, especially in dance. The Forest Schools area makes an outstanding contribution to provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children relish these opportunities to explore the environment and test their emerging skills across the areas of learning. An increasing emphasis on investigation and discussion has had some positive effects on achievement, for example in narrowing the gap that had arisen between mathematics and English. The impact of these initiatives is not consistent across the school, however. There are good opportunities to use and develop literacy skills across subjects but more limited opportunities to apply mathematical skills. Care, guidance and support are good. Arrangements for joining the school help children to settle quickly and good support is provided for transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides clear leadership and has good support from staff, all of whom share a common ambition for the school. Subject leaders manage improvements specific to their subjects and communication between staff is good. A large proportion of whole school development still rests with the headteacher, limiting its effectiveness. Nevertheless, provision has been improved since the last inspection, particularly in ICT and music. Weaknesses in pupils' outcomes have been accurately identified and are now beginning to be addressed. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity for further sustained improvement.

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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?

- Secure reliably good achievement for all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring that the good aspects of provision that have been established have a secure and consistent impact on progress throughout the school
 - keeping a good balance in lessons between teacher input and support and pupils' independent learning
 - providing more opportunities for the use of mathematics across the curriculum.
- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - devolving more of the responsibility for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of whole-school improvement to members of staff other than the headteacher.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. There is no significant difference in outcomes between boys and girls, and pupils with moderate learning difficulties make broadly similar progress to their peers. Those with severe learning difficulties make good progress towards their individualised targets.

Good learning is evident when pupils tackle challenging tasks that they understand the purpose of and are supported appropriately while they work. Slower learning was observed when pupils were unsure about the purpose of the task or not confident in how to tackle problems and record their work. Pupils respond well when role-play is included in lessons as a prelude to writing. For example, Year 3 pupils acted out characters in different versions of the Punch and Judy story, needing little supervision or intervention because learning was purposeful and enjoyable. Samples of written work reflect the positive impact of this initiative. The pupils' arithmetical skills have improved because of the school's emphasis on simplified methods of recording computation, but their work does not yet consistently reflect the impact of the recent emphasis on investigations. On occasions, gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding reduce their ability to tackle complex problems.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are aware of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Pupils enjoy physical activity and know the importance of this to their health. Pupils take on roles of responsibility well around the school and the local community, for example they have contributed to the local environment by helping in a campaign to clear graffiti. They are used to reflecting on spiritual questions and respond positively during prayers in assemblies. Their appreciation of different cultures has been strengthened by their contacts with a school in Africa, and by exploring stories of some of the different ethnicities and cultures represented within the school. They have a good knowledge of different religions but a less secure knowledge of the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	2
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	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?

All the lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory and half were good. Teaching is of a similar quality in both key stages. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and generally manage them well. ICT is used effectively to engage pupils' attention during introductions to lessons and as a tool for pupils to use to enhance their own learning. For example, pupils load texts, digital photographs and other features onto the school website and construct and deliver presentations by computer. Teachers are generally confident in teaching English, and so find opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Although improvements have been made to the teaching of mathematics, teachers provide fewer opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Marking is consistently helpful in English, giving pointers for improvement and referring back to previous guidance. It is less helpful in mathematics, focusing largely on correct methods and presentation and insufficiently on mathematical thinking and setting further challenges. Different activities are often planned for different ability groups, leading to differential outcomes. Occasionally, tasks are similar across the ability range leading to some loss of motivation among more able pupils.

The development of ICT in the curriculum has extended and enriched the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils use laptops extensively to support their learning and the school plays a leading role in using new technologies to communicate with parents and carers and with partner schools. A range of clubs further extends opportunities for pupils across a wide

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range of interests including sports. Good care, guidance and support include excellent provision for a small number of pupils with severe learning difficulties. Deployment decisions are taken to reflect their needs, for example by allowing them to join different age groups as appropriate. Measures taken to improve attendance have been successful in reducing absences from above to below the national average over the past year.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully instilled a common sense of shared ambition among staff to raise standards and continue improving provision. There is a strong sense of teamwork among teaching staff and a willingness to address any weaknesses that are identified. The staffing structure has helped to secure some good improvements, particularly in reading and writing. A whole-school overview is established through informal discussions among staff as well as formal meetings. This serves to inform staff but not to effectively secure optimum distribution of responsibility for whole school development.

The governing body and staff ensure that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere for all. Equality of opportunity is fostered through effective policies and through vigilant supervision. Some of the most vulnerable pupils receive particularly effective provision to enable them to participate whenever possible with their peers. The school has many routes for parents to express views and concerns and most are satisfied with its approach. A range of local partnerships, centred round the church and cluster of local schools helps to widen opportunities for the children and broaden their horizons. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties and is improving its contribution to strategic planning. It ensures that safeguarding procedures, including safe recruitment, are sound. The school takes adequate measures to promote community cohesion but is in the early stages of evaluating its success in this area.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision in the Reception class ensures that the children build on expected levels of attainment on entry to reach above average attainment before they leave. Their conversations at the end of the Reception year show an above average knowledge and understanding of the world and good vocabulary. Their personal and social skills are very well developed; for example they show a strong degree of independence and confidence in their choices. Regular assessments of the children's progress feed into daily planning. A balance is struck between teacher input and learning through play so that activities encourage children to apply newly taught skills. Health and safety are given appropriate emphasis and children are very aware of how to look after themselves. For example, they help to assess for realistic risks associated with the use of the Forest Schools area and this helps them to confidently tackle adventurous activities. The use of the Forest Schools area is particularly strong. Children often become very absorbed in individual and collaborative projects in this setting, showing good skills across the areas of learning. They climb into trees confidently, organise group games, use mathematical skills to select suitably sized materials for the dens and other things they make and want to learn more about what they observe. During the inspection, for example, a child independently consulted an information book to correctly identify a dead creature that had been found as a wood mouse and not a shrew because it did not have a long nose. The children are encouraged to make full use of modern technology, with regular tuition on specific computer programmes relevant to their age group. The setting is led and managed well with good supervision of indoor and outdoor areas. Staff interact skilfully with the children as they play, allowing them a good degree of free choice and good support to refine their skills. Older pupils with severe learning difficulties are included in some Reception activities, particularly in the Forest Schools area, enabling them to learn enjoyably in activities that

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match their personal and educational needs but are not readily available to them within their peer group setting.

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

Most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views. A few parents and carers have concerns about behaviour and whether it is dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that pupils behaved well around the school and observed only occasional instances of behaviour that was less than good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whittington CofE 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	55	36	39	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	52	38	41	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	41	48	52	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	45	46	50	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	54	39	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	43	45	49	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	52	39	42	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)	38	41	44	48	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	40	44	48	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	36	40	43	13	14	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	34	48	52	7	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	39	44	48	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	51	38	41	2	2	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.



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whittington CofE Primary School, Worcester, WR5 2QZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited your school. You receive a satisfactory quality of education that helps you reach above average attainment by the end of Year 6. You have a good start in the Reception class because you learn such a lot through play, particularly in the Forest Schools area. You feel safe in school, behave well and do your best to stay healthy. You enjoy your lessons, especially ICT, sports and music, and we were impressed with your achievements in these areas. We particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly. You do well in reading and your writing has improved a great deal recently. Your mathematics skills have also improved but some of you lack confidence when tackling problems. Your lessons are sometimes exciting and make you work hard, but at other times they are less interesting for you and are not challenging enough to get the best out of you. You have lots of opportunities to try different activities outside lessons and are often given responsibilities around the school. Your teachers look after you well and prepare you well for the secondary school.

Your headteacher makes sure your school is a welcoming place to learn. He has a good team of staff and we have asked him to share more of the responsibility for improving the school with them. Here are the other things we have asked your teachers of do to make your school even better.

Give you more opportunities to work at challenging activities on your own in lessons.

Make sure you understand tasks and have the support you need to do them.

Help you to use your mathematical skills in other subjects.

You can help by working even harder in lessons and asking for help when needed.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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