

St White's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115520
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379089
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvia Doggett
Headteacher	Paul Woodward
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons led by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, pupils' work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 80 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from pupils and the school staff.

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

- How far all leaders and members of the governing body hold high expectations, set ambitious targets, provide great challenge and check performance robustly in order to raise achievement.
- The degree to which the remodelled curriculum is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements in English and mathematics.
- Whether the promotion of community cohesion involves the pupils themselves in meeting and communicating with people from other communities in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Information about the school

St White's is larger than most primary schools. The vast majority of the pupils are from White British families or other White backgrounds and nearly all speak English as their main language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is average. At just under 20%, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most primary schools. Most of these pupils have some form of learning difficulty.

The school has Healthy School status.

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

St White's Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where the children make a brisk start to their education and make good progress. Across the school, behaviour is good, pupils work well together and lessons are settled and purposeful. School self-evaluation is rooted in accurate assessment, detailed tracking of pupils' progress and careful monitoring of lessons by senior leaders. The priorities for improvement are the right ones for the school. There is satisfactory ambition and drive to improve amongst all staff and members of the governing body. The capacity for future improvement is also satisfactory.

There is recognition amongst key leaders that pupils' achievement could be greater. There is firm evidence of gradually increasing progress and attainment, although this is not consistent across the school. At present, attainment is average and progress satisfactory. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long, holding back the pupils from completing even more work. This particularly affects the higher attainers who sometimes have to complete the same work as those in lower-attaining groups. The cautious step-by-step approach by teachers, while right for some, does not always allow the pupils themselves to manage their own learning and use their imagination and initiative to increase their work rate.

While teaching quality is satisfactory, there are good lessons that do not show these cautious traits, leading to good-quality learning. In these, pupils are provided with ample opportunities to check their own learning and identify the next steps for themselves. Where this happens, their progress is faster than where pupils work with less information about their achievement. The marking of pupils' work is similarly inconsistent in creating a dialogue about what has been learned and what the pupil has to do next to improve.

The views of the school shared with inspectors by parents and carers are cautious about its successes. Some felt their children could make greater progress and that they could be involved more in their children's learning. Senior leaders have adopted the improvement of partnerships with parents and carers as a key school improvement priority, which the evidence from inspection suggests is appropriate.

The school provides good-quality care, guidance and support for the pupils, keeping them safe and secure. A strength of the welfare provided is the way in which the pupils themselves respond. They appreciate the need to care for each other, which

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they do with great success. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is also fostered well.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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?

- Give pupils greater and more consistent opportunities to manage their own learning by:
 - ensuring teachers do not talk for too long in lessons
 - creating opportunities for pupils to work independently and to show imagination and initiative as they do so
 - checking that work for higher attainers is always appropriate and challenging enough.
- Strengthen the effectiveness and consistency of the use of assessment to support learning by:
 - making sure pupils know what they are to learn at the start of lessons
 - giving them opportunities to talk about their progress at appropriate intervals through the lesson
 - allowing them to summarise their own learning and identify the next step at the lesson end
 - using marking of work to create a dialogue about achievement and how to improve.
- Build a stronger partnership with parents and carers by
 - keeping them updated about their children's achievement
 - ensuring their comments, suggestions and concerns are heard and followed up as appropriate
 - creating opportunities for them to share in their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The starting level of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than expected for their age. Because provision is matched carefully to their needs, the children make good progress. The rate of progress slows a little in Key Stages 1 and 2, although it is satisfactory overall. Through the Years from 1 to 6, progress is sometimes inconsistent with spurts in one class followed by slower progress in the next. This is mainly due to the differences in the work challenge provided and in the approach to teaching. In lessons where expectation and methods are good, progress is accelerated, as seen in a mixed-age Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson focused on square numbers. In this lesson, the pupils worked purposefully and productively to investigate the outcomes when pairs of square numbers are added. The higher

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attainers used their initiative well in the lesson and were able to explain clearly what they found particularly taxing and the way they had tackled the difficulty.

Attainment in mathematics has lagged behind that in English during recent years. Currently, however, there is similar attainment in both subjects. Pupils' books show appropriate focus on mathematical knowledge and skills and an increasing amount of work where such knowledge and skills are applied to problem-solving and investigation. In English, a successful focus on phonics (the sounds that letters make) has enabled younger pupils to make a more confident approach to reading and the work to improve writing skills is proving successful, as seen in the examples of pupils' work displayed around the school. For example, the American satellite that had crashed to earth outside a string of classrooms had stirred pupils' inquisitiveness, enquiry and conjecture, which they captured well in their writing.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that staff look after them well. They enjoy healthy food, knowing which to choose and which to resist. This appreciation is reflected well in the school's Healthy School status. There is much evidence that the pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community, although their contribution to communities further afield is rather less. Attendance has improved during the last year so that it is broadly average. The school rightly monitors attendance thoroughly and follows up unexplained absence and lateness promptly and rigorously.

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	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality is securely satisfactory or better in all lessons. The lessons observed by inspectors showed no inadequate teaching and pupils' books demonstrate the same. The inconsistency in quality of teaching has resulted in the satisfactory judgement by inspectors. The school does not have to look far for models of good teaching. It is consistently good for the Early Years Foundation Stage children and there is some outstanding teaching in the mixed-age Year 4 and 5 class. Here, the pupils were totally motivated by their writing task to edit each other's work. They eagerly sought 'connectives' in the text and also suggested where they could be inserted. The higher-attaining pupils explored unusual words to conjure up the smell of coffee or washrooms. The pupils took the role of teacher, working very successfully together and having frequent opportunities to evaluate their successes and difficulties. The staff provided effective encouragement and support, so that lower attainers were able to match the others in making outstanding progress.

The curriculum is undergoing modification at present to provide more opportunities for cross-subject links that will underpin the development of essential skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy. The recent technical difficulties have restricted the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in this way. However, plans are well established for drawing on the advantages provided by ICT when pupils research and investigate mathematically and scientifically and communicate more effectively in writing. The revised curriculum is designed to encourage pupils' creativity, originality and independence in learning. Opportunities are not yet consistent to allow such skills to be polished to the full but there are some innovative features in the curriculum, not least the discovery of dragon eggs and, more recently, the burned-out satellite, that have grasped pupils' imagination with relish.

The care, guidance and support provided enable all pupils, regardless of background, to make appropriate progress and to mix well socially. Pupils with any form of barrier to learning are counselled well. The school draws well from its partnerships with other schools and outside agencies in supporting pupils' individual needs. The close monitoring of behaviour ensures pupils work and play harmoniously and sensibly together. Partnerships with parents and carers add to the effectiveness of care, guidance and support in individual cases of concern, although in more general terms, parents and carers wish to see even stronger links in supporting their children's needs.

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	3

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff of the school quickly adapt their practice to match improvement priorities. In some cases, there is personal interpretation rather than a consistent approach in doing so. This has resulted in the differences in the quality of teaching and progress rates found by inspectors. Nonetheless, all staff hold appropriate expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour, are well motivated and apply the necessary energy and drive to bring improvement. Teaching and learning are led and managed appropriately, which is resulting in better-quality lessons, although work remains to ensure every lesson brings maximum achievement.

Members of the governing body understand the successes and weaknesses of the school, largely as a result of the headteacher's and senior leaders' evaluations. They are, as yet, less experienced in probing into school performance, although they have started the process by more-focused visits to school and investigation of school data and documentation.

The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met. It is well experienced to contribute to the school's good safeguarding procedures. These are watchful and robust, being well supported by up-to-the-minute guidance and effective staff training. The governing body is also working with staff to further improve the promotion of community cohesion. The links between pupils and members of communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and overseas are being strengthened successfully by the creation of additional partnerships and more frequent pupil visits outside the Forest of Dean.

Pupils have satisfactory equality of opportunity to achieve successfully, although occasionally the demands made of higher attainers does not result in maximised progress. Despite this, the school does a good job to ensure pupils work and play well together, free of any form of discrimination or intolerance.

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	3

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The improvement of provision in the Early years Foundation Stage has been one of the school's main successes since the previous inspection. The children are making good progress and, while not all have the expected skills and knowledge when they join Year 1, they have advanced their understanding well in all six areas of learning. As part of this improvement, the reliability, regularity and use of assessment stand out. In most lessons, all staff are seen making observations and interventions in learning that are recorded in detail for further evaluation, discussion and use in planning subsequent activities. This occurs both indoors and outside. The outdoor area itself is much more interesting, well resourced and used imaginatively compared with the situation reflected in the previous report. It is evident that the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

The children are enthusiasts for learning. They want to do well and to please the staff, so they behave very well, work hard and happily talk to each other and the adults about their learning. This was observed when the children shared their learning in a phonics session where they examined shiny objects from their treasure box. The staff constantly urged and encouraged the children to rehearse the eight sounds in focus and to demonstrate the actions that accompanied them. The children did this gleefully, matching the objects to the sound for the word: 'a scary smelly sock'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of the questionnaire was broadly average at just under 30% and the

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responses were similar to those found in other primary schools. However, parents and carers were guarded in some of their comments. A fairly small proportion wrote comments, and of these, all but one wrote about their concerns. The chief of these focus on the information the school shares about their children's progress, the actual progress being made, the support provided to foster best progress and the degree of challenge in pupils' work. A small number raised safety concerns related to the split school site.

Inspectors judge from this inspection that, while progress is satisfactory and attainment average, both could be improved further. The first two improvement areas in this report are designed to assist this process. The partnership between the school, parents and carers is the third improvement task. Hence, the three are closely related to the concerns parents and carers shared with the inspection team.

Inspectors can reassure parents and carers that the school manages the safety issues concerning crossing the road that divides the school as capably as possible.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 278 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	34	50	63	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	25	56	70	4	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	16	59	74	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	16	51	64	14	18	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	20	25	52	65	6	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	13	63	79	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	20	62	78	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)	11	14	58	73	9	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	13	61	76	7	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	13	54	68	12	15	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	15	50	63	15	19	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	14	18	48	60	12	15	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	21	53	66	8	10	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%. Percentages have been rounded.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.

3 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St White's Primary School, Cinderford GL14 3DH

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We were pleased to see you behave well and try hard in your work. We judge that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. We have written about this in our report, where we discuss some key things about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress and develop the expected skills and knowledge for your age.
- Children in Reception do well in their work and are very keen to come to school.
- You get on well with each other and your teachers, and enjoy your work.
- Most of your lessons are taught satisfactorily and some are even better than this.
- You are well looked after by all the adults at school.
- The school leaders are keen to make further improvements and know what they should focus on first.

There are three main things we have identified for improvement.

- You could have more chances to plan your own learning and to work independently.
- There could be more opportunities for you to talk about how well you are learning and what you need to do next to improve.
- Your parents and carers could play an even bigger part in your education at school.

We know you will want to help make these improvements. To start, you could share your ideas about what makes a good lesson with your teachers and parents and carers.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington
Lead Inspector

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