

Whitefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104570
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377098
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hoare
Headteacher (Acting)	Nadine Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	04 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons involving 10 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and several parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, planning and school policies, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. The team analysed 86 questionnaires returned by parents or carers, and also those returned by staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- How well are pupils achieving in all classes? Is the improved progress of pupils in school now assured?
- How well are different groups of pupils achieving, such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language?
- What is the capacity of staff at all levels of leadership and management and of the governing body to sustain recent improvement?
- How effective are leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide for the needs of children and help them to make good progress?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. A very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average. Just under 10% of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are several different home languages, including Polish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school runs a breakfast club which is part of this inspection. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher, with an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher in place since autumn 2010, as well as several staff changes.

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

2

Main findings

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Its provision is rapidly improving and this is the result of good leadership and management by the senior leadership team after a period of staff changes and disruption to pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated since the last inspection. It improved dramatically last year and is now broadly average. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory overall. In some year groups, where teaching is particularly effective, achievement is good.

Pupils' behaviour is good. A few pupils display challenging behaviour on occasions and these are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils take on responsibility well in school and there is an active school council that is involved well in decision-making. Levels of attendance have been below average in the past and assessment information shows that those with poor attendance have underachieved. Attendance has improved now and is broadly average as a result of recently improved procedures by the school.

The quality of provision is good, though many developments are recent and some are still becoming established. It is too soon for the impact of these developments to be translated securely into good outcomes for pupils. With a programme of support by the local authority the quality of teaching has improved and is now good overall. However, there is still a small minority of lessons that are only satisfactory. In these lessons the pace of pupils' learning is variable and dips when activities change. The curriculum engages the interest of pupils well and this is proving successful, especially in motivating boys. Links between subjects have been formed but the way the curriculum promotes basic skills of literacy and numeracy is not fully developed. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving as a result of good leadership and teamwork. The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Dynamic leadership by the acting headteacher has been a deciding factor in improving provision in the last school year. She has established a strong leadership team and all staff share her aspirations. As a result, the school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and the monitoring of performance has had a positive impact on provision. The governing body has also come through a period of uncertainty, but

under the guidance of the experienced Chair, it has played an important part in promoting the school's provision. With several new members starting this term, the governing body is making a satisfactory contribution to school improvement. As a result of the significant impact the leadership team has had since its establishment, the school has good capacity to sustain this improvement.

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?

- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - sharing best practice among staff, for example, by peer coaching
 - making sure that the pace of learning in all lessons is good.
- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - building on strong features, such as the daily writing sessions
 - developing basic skills across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve levels of attendance by:
 - ensuring procedures to reduce persistent absence are rigorously applied
 - using positive strategies to encourage high attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils' engagement with their learning is good as a result of the improved curriculum, teaching and behaviour management. Most pupils concentrate well in class and they offer their opinions and ideas readily. They share ideas with one another satisfactorily and older pupils begin to work independently. Pupils enjoy a number of newly introduced opportunities, for example, when they use computer software in class, at home or in an after-school club that helps their mathematical skills. At times, however, they do not remain on task when the pace of the lesson dips.

Most children enter the Nursery class with levels of skill that are low for their age, especially in personal development and communication and language. Pupils' overall achievement has not been secure in the past. For example, standards in Year 6 in 2010 were well below average and the pupils' progress was inadequate. With renewed vigour provided by the current leadership team, standards rose dramatically and were high in 2011. This constitutes outstanding progress for that year group. In current classes, pupils' progress is never less than satisfactory and in some year groups, for example, in Years 5 and 6 it is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and this is an improvement over past performance. Pupils at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress. Boys are doing well and matching or, in some year groups, outperforming girls. The gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is narrowing. Higher-attaining and talented pupils did well last year and in current year groups their achievement is good.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are good and this view is endorsed by pupils and parents and carers. The school's revised behaviour policy is robust and pupils respond positively. Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe. They feel secure in school and know they can turn to an adult if something is troubling them. They are aware of the importance of safe behaviour when they use the internet. They have a good understanding of how to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle. A good number of pupils take part in a wide range of after-school physical activities. In the role of play leaders, monitors and school councillors, the pupils contribute well to the life of the school. At the time of the inspection, councillors were taking part in elections for the junior parliament in the city. Three pupils were standing for election as mayor. Pupils are also keen and go to great lengths to support charities both locally and further afield. Overall, pupils' development of skills for their future well-being is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has been a key focus of attention for the senior leadership team. Opportunities for staff to see good practice in other schools have been taken and a revised policy for teaching and learning is in place. However, recent improvements in teaching have not yet made up for the past underachievement of pupils and this is why their achievement is currently satisfactory rather than good. Teachers use new technology well to stimulate pupils' interest. They have high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and this is shown in the good standards of handwriting and neat workbooks. Teachers' planning is good and caters for the different levels of attainment in classes. Teaching assistants are used effectively to help pupils with additional needs. However, in a small minority of lessons, the pace of pupils' learning is uneven. For example when pupils move on to group activities from whole-class teaching, they sometimes lose concentration. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and encourages pupils to understand the next steps in their learning and become involved in evaluating their efforts.

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

The curriculum engages pupils' interest well and the promotion of basic skills through a topic approach has recently begun. Daily writing sessions have been successfully introduced to improve pupils' writing. The curriculum is enriched through trips, themed weeks and visitors, as well as a good range of activities after school. Personal, social and health education lessons feature regularly on the timetable. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with behavioural difficulties is good. There are visiting specialists with fluency in several languages to help pupils at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress.

There is a central focus on supporting pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Parents and carers speak highly of the senior leadership team in helping them in difficult times. The work of the inclusion manager in overseeing support is particularly effective. The successful breakfast club is subsidised by the school so that all families, whatever their circumstances, can make good use of it. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are good. As a result, pupils report they feel confident about moving on to secondary school. The school is taking a range of steps to motivate pupils to attend regularly and to improve the attendance of a few persistent absentees. Their impact is beginning to be evident in improved attendance.

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?

Senior leaders have made a significant impact on achievement and provision through detailed analysis of how well the school is doing and where its weaknesses lie. An accelerated plan for improvement last year was supported well by the local authority and has been carried out effectively. The monitoring of teaching and learning has had a positive impact on its quality. The current school development plan focuses on consolidating the progress that has been made so far. All staff report that they share the vision of the school motto, 'Nothing But The Best', and senior leaders are now looking to improve the skills of middle managers so that their roles can be enhanced. The governing body, after a period of contraction, is reinvigorated with new membership and is in a good position to improve its satisfactory contribution to school development.

The school has developed good links with parents and carers through weekly newsletters, termly consultation meetings and the school website. Parents and carers report they value the approach of the acting headteacher. All aspects of safeguarding are good, including record keeping, staff training and awareness of child protection issues and procedures to secure the safety of the pupils. The school promotes equal

opportunity satisfactorily by tracking the performance of different groups of pupils closely. It is making progress in narrowing the attainment gap between different groups. The school's work in promoting harmony in the local community by encouraging a better understanding of newcomers, some of whom are asylum seekers, is good although its links with schools further afield are not fully developed. Consequently, the school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory overall.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. Most enter Year 1 with levels of attainment that have improved from their low starting points but which are still below average, especially in the early skills of literacy. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and physical development. Children enjoy their experiences in the Nursery and Reception classes and their speaking skills are promoted well to overcome early barriers to learning. For example, children enjoyed taking photographs of each other and the environment around them. Staff used these well as a basis to describe what the children could see, helping their language development.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staffing difficulties in the key stage led to a period in which developments were put on hold. Under the leadership of a recently appointed key stage leader, an audit of provision was made during the final months of the last school year. This has led to a good action plan, a rigorous approach to assessment and a well-organised curriculum both indoors and outside. The impact of these developments is not yet fully realised but is beginning to be seen in improved learning and progress. Staff work well as a team and provide a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by adults. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent and help the children to settle in quickly in the Nursery class. There is very good attention given to safeguarding the children's welfare, helping them to be happy and secure.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers express strong support for the work of the school. Every parent or carer who returned a questionnaire responded confirmed that their children enjoy school and that they are happy with their child’s experience of the school. The overwhelming majority consider their children are safe in school and are making good progress. They consider the school is helping their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. They are helped to support their child’s learning. Inspectors support these positive views while noting that overall pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. A very small minority of parents and carers consider the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, does not take account of their suggestions or concerns and is not effectively led and managed. Inspectors find the revised behaviour policy is being carried out effectively in dealing with poor behaviour. They find that the school encourages parents and carers to give their views by speaking to staff as well as giving their views on consultation evenings. They find that the school is led and managed well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitefield 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 244 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	64	31	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	65	29	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	64	27	31	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	66	28	33	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	69	26	30	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	63	30	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	56	36	42	1	1	1	1
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)	54	63	29	34	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	64	30	35	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	55	31	36	8	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	53	34	40	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	59	30	35	3	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	67	28	33	0	0	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	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 is 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Whitefield Primary School, Liverpool L6 2HZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning.

We found that Whitefield Primary is a satisfactory school where many improvements are taking place. As you move up through the school, you learn and grow together happily. You behave well and are polite. You told us you have few concerns about bullying and you know who to turn to if you are unhappy about anyone's behaviour. Most of you work hard in your lessons and you get on well with each other and with the adults in school. They look after you well. They have been working hard, too, to improve the quality of teaching and the subjects you are taught, in order to help you to do as well as possible. Because of this, you are now starting to make better progress in your learning and we were pleased to hear some of you say that lessons are more interesting and fun than they used to be.

We think the acting headteacher and senior staff will make sure your school carries on improving. To help them in this we have asked them to:

- make sure that teaching is always good or better
- improve your skills in reading, writing and mathematics by giving you opportunities in topic work and other subjects to use these skills
- make sure you all attend school regularly.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by making sure your attendance is good. Remember, good attenders = good learners.

With my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Carruthers
Lead inspector

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