

Whinstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111656
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	378332
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Darbyshire
Headteacher	M Poppitt
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 26 lessons and observed 21 teachers. They held discussions with members of the governing body, the school improvement partner, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including teachers' planning, safeguarding documentation, the school's tracking of pupils' progress and evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 159 parents and carers.

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

- The progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- The impact and consistency of the use of assessment information on the outcomes for all groups of pupils to determine whether teaching is good.
- How effectively curricular provision leads to improved pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of monitoring at all levels of leadership as a means of driving academic improvements.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a smaller percentage than average of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. A number of changes have been made to the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection, with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and new assistant headteacher. The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Activemark and the International School Award.

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. Ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed is at the heart of the school's work. Self-evaluation is accurate. The role of leaders and managers, at all levels, in monitoring the quality of the school's work has developed well. Consequently, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs improving. Actions taken since the last inspection have resulted in sustained improvements. Systems to track pupils' progress and strategies to support those who need help with their learning have raised levels of attainment and improved the rate of pupils' progress. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' personal development is good within a caring ethos where pupils are confident that staff will keep them safe. Pupils take a pride in their work and demonstrate a desire to improve its quality. The school's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory and results in their mainly positive view of the school. A wealth of information is provided to parents and carers regarding the life of the school. However, information regarding pupils' progress is less frequent and limits parents' and carers' ability to play a full part in their children's learning.

Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are typical for their age. They get off to a good start to their learning in the Nursery class but do not build consistently on what they already know when they move into the Reception classes. This is particularly evident in the development of children's communication, literacy and language skills. Teachers use a structured programme for the teaching of letters and their sounds. However, they do not sufficiently adapt this programme to take account of what children already know. Consequently, children do not make consistently good progress in their early reading and writing skills.

As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attain above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Lessons are generally lively and engaging, contributing to pupils' enjoyment of school. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Occasionally, during lessons, tasks are not adapted quickly enough to maintain a high level of pace and challenge in order to improve further the good progress that pupils make. This is more evident in mathematics than English, where the use of worksheet based activities curtails pupils' ability to investigate and put all of their learning into practice. This is one of

the reasons why although improving, pupils' progress in mathematics, is currently not as strong as that in English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to increase the rate of pupils' progress particularly in mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently using their assessment of pupils' learning in lessons to re-shape tasks and thereby maintaining a high level of pace and challenge
 - ensuring that the curriculum for the teaching of mathematics builds progressively on pupils' prior learning
 - reducing the use of worksheet based activities
 - increasing the opportunities to improve pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects.

- Improve the outcomes for children in the Early Year Foundation Stage, particularly their early reading and writing skills, by:
 - increasing the amount of good or better teaching in the Reception classes
 - ensuring activities in the Reception classes build progressively on what children have learnt in the Nursery class
 - ensuring teachers adapt the programme used for the teaching of letters and their sounds so that all children are helped to take their next step in learning
 - ensuring leaders and managers make effective use of assessment information to identify areas which need further improvement.

- Improve the engagement of parents and carers in their children's learning by:
 - increasing the regularity of the information provided to parents and carers regarding their children's progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good. They show interest and enjoyment in their work and they are keen to learn. They tackle activities with enthusiasm and are able to maintain concentration for lengthy periods. By Year 6, pupils have good reading skills and enjoy books. They write confidently using a variety of styles with a good understanding of purpose and audience. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils quickly recognise how their good mathematical knowledge of the basic skills of place value and number can be used to solve problems. When these opportunities are not provided frequently enough, pupils' progress slows and this is one of the reasons why progress, although good, is not as strong in mathematics as it is in English. The good and occasionally outstanding progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is one of the reasons why attainment by the end of Year 6 continues to improve. The support these pupils receive ensures that many reach the expected level for their age by the time they leave Year 6. As a result, these pupils, together with their peers, are prepared well for their next stage of education.

Pupils are polite and considerate and appreciate the ideas and views of others. Their good behaviour and willingness to take the initiative in their learning contribute well

to their good progress. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and, in so doing, contribute well to the life of the school. Opportunities to explore the arts, music and the world beyond the school contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a well developed awareness of the traditions and beliefs of other cultures, which is enhanced by links with schools in France and Uganda. Pupils understand the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles and talk enthusiastically about the need for a balanced diet and to take regular exercise. They have a good understanding of what might be an unsafe situation and can explain articulately the actions they would take to keep themselves free from harm. Attendance is broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers set very clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and they respond well. Teachers' questioning skills are good and are used effectively to check pupils' understanding. Pupils are challenged to provide detailed explanations and encouraged to become reflective, independent learners. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' progress over time. In the best lessons, planning takes full account of pupils' different levels of ability and plans are adjusted daily to reflect the outcomes of previous tasks. In a few classes where teaching remains satisfactory, particularly in mathematics lessons, teachers' planning rigidly follows guidance from national strategies or published schemes of work and is not adjusted well enough to reflect pupils' prior knowledge and skills. On these occasions, some pupils repeat work in which they have already shown competence.

The curriculum takes good account of pupils' own experiences and interest to make learning relevant and meaningful. Good use of specialist coaching and teaching skills together with the use of visits, visitors and residential trips enhance the quality of pupils' learning. The links made between different areas of the curriculum make lessons on writing, for example, more interesting and purposeful and is one of the

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

reasons why attainment in writing is improving rapidly. In some classes, teachers skilfully use their knowledge of pupils’ ability across a range of subjects to identify where pupils may have gaps in their mathematical knowledge or skill and use this information to plan tasks which enable pupils to take the next step in their learning. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils made good progress in their ability to record data in a range of ways, a weakness indentified within a previous science lesson. This good practice is not yet consistent across all classes.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe and well supported in school. The school has created a strong team of skilled teaching assistants who complement the work of the teachers to give good support to pupils of all abilities. This is particularly effective in helping pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to close the gap between their attainment and that of their peers. This is a strength of the school and a key reason why the proportion of these pupils who make at least the expected progress and attain at the expected level by the end of Year 6 is significantly above the national average.

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?

The school is moving from strength to strength due to improved systems of distributed leadership in which leaders and managers at all levels play an effective part in driving and sustaining improved outcomes for pupils. A varied and regular programme of monitoring and evaluation effectively identifies the correct priorities for improvement. For example, subject and phase leaders regularly monitor planning, check pupils’ work and teach alongside colleagues. As a result, the quality of teaching has continued to improve with much that is now good and some which is outstanding. Progress meetings between senior staff and teachers identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind and result in the provision of timely additional support.

The governing body is supportive of the school and has effective systems in place to engage with staff in order to evaluate and effectively challenge the school’s performance. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It has pertinent information about different groups of pupils and regularly checks their performance. As a result, pupils, whatever their background or ability, are helped to reach their full potential. Safeguarding meets requirements and the school adopts recommended good practice in most areas of work. Community cohesion is promoted well in school and this leads to a harmonious community where relationships between pupils and staff are good. There is good engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school and its immediate community, especially those outside the United Kingdom. A recent partnership established with a

school in Watford is beginning to improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in modern-day Britain, identified as a relative weakness within the school's self-evaluation.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children settle well into the Nursery class with good routines quickly established. Relationships between children and staff are good. Staff make their expectations clear and regularly reinforce these with praise. As a result, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and consistently reach above average standards in this area of their learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children are provided with a suitable range of activities. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-led tasks and child-initiated learning, both indoors and within the extensive outdoor area. In the Nursery class, the key worker system ensures that all adults are effectively deployed and clearly understand their role in supporting children's learning. This good practice is not yet established in the Reception classes. In the Nursery class, regular observations of children's progress give staff a clear idea of what children need to learn next. In the Reception classes, the results of these observations are not always as sharply used to plan children's next steps in learning. This is a key reason why provision is satisfactory rather than good.

Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The welfare requirements are met to ensure that children are safe and well supported. Suitable assessment systems are in place to measure and record the children's achievement but analysis of this information is not yet used to best effect to establish the key priorities for further improvement.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost a third of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The majority of those who did so support the work of the school with additional positive comments such as ‘the school operates efficiently and makes an effort to include the community and families into the learning experience of the children. I have very positive feelings about the school and am confident in the headteacher and staff.’ In the main, inspection evidence supports parents’ and carers’ positive views. A number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire did not agree that the school keeps them informed of their children’s progress or helps them to support their children’s learning. Inspection evidence indicates that the school’s engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory but that the information provided by the school to parents and carers regarding their children’s progress is infrequent and does limit the opportunities which they have to support their children’s learning. In addition a number of parents and carers also expressed concern regarding how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that teachers manage behaviour well and this makes a positive contribution to the quality of pupils’ learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whinstone 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 159 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 490 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	52	71	45	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	47	82	52	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	26	88	55	24	15	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	32	95	60	10	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	59	37	91	57	7	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	36	78	49	16	10	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	41	81	51	7	4	2	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)	52	33	90	57	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	32	99	62	6	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	21	92	58	17	11	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	22	95	60	17	11	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	30	92	58	11	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	35	94	59	4	3	3	2

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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whinstone Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 0RJ

Thank you for being so friendly, courteous and welcoming to the inspection team during our recent inspection of your school. You are clearly proud of your school and feel safe and happy there. We were impressed with your good behaviour and your good attitudes in lessons.

We enjoyed observing you in class and listening to your views about the school. You helped us to find out that your school provides you with a good education. You make good progress and by the time you leave school, the standards you reach are above the average expected for your age.

To help your school become even better, we have said that it should:

- continue to improve the progress which you make, particularly in mathematics, by making sure that the pace of your learning, the challenges which you are provided with and the curriculum which is planned, consistently help you to do as well as you can
- improve how well children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly when learning to read and write by having more good teaching in the Reception classes and teachers providing all children with activities which build on what they already know
- improve the information which is provided to your parents and carers about your progress so that they can help you with your learning.

You can help by continuing to listen carefully and always trying your best.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Buller
Lead Inspector

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