

White Laith Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107932
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	377672
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Smith
Headteacher	Nicola Sheerin
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
School address	Naburn Drive Leeds LS14 2BL
Telephone number	0113 2930280
Fax number	0113 2946800
Email address	headteacher@whitelaitheeds.sch.uk

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed eight teachers. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at learning in lessons and in pupils' books. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, school policies, safeguarding documents and details of the progress made by pupils. The responses to 141 questionnaires from parents and carers, and those from pupils and staff were scrutinised.

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

- Whether the school has made sufficient progress since its previous inspection, particularly with regard to attainment.
- Whether the higher-attaining children make enough progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How effectively the school provides for pupils' cultural development and community cohesion.
- The support provided for teachers as they become more accountable for the progress of their pupils and the overall impact of this on achievement.

Information about the school

White Laith is slightly smaller than the average primary school. Currently, there are five classes in Key Stages 1 and 2; of these two are mixed-age classes including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school also provides some day care for a small number of children aged three to four years in the Nursery.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little above the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is exceptionally low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times (pupil mobility) is in line with the national average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status, Activemark, the Leeds Inclusion Chartermark and the Stephen Lawrence Standard.

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. It has improved since its previous inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage continues to be outstanding and a model of exemplary practice. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils has improved and is now excellent. This is underpinned by pupils' superb behaviour that contributes to their outstanding attitudes to safety and healthy lifestyles. The outstanding provision for safeguarding, care, guidance and support helps pupils to develop the confidence and independence that enable them to become effective learners and mature members of their cohesive school community.

The majority of children start school with skills below age-related expectations. All groups of pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Recent data and observations indicate that attainment is rising. Ambitious targets are being met. However, it is too early for this improvement to be regarded as secure, particularly because mathematics is not as strong as English. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use and apply problem-solving and mathematical skills to subjects across the curriculum. Writing is used more frequently in other subjects but opportunities for pupils to use these skills are not always fully exploited.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with half of all teaching seen judged outstanding. The strength of the teaching reflects the school's emphasis on the need for similar approaches in classroom management and teaching styles across the school. As a result, pupils are more aware of what is expected of them. The effective use of assessment ensures the learning needs of pupils are fully met. Skilful teaching of the links between sounds and letters has improved pupils' confidence and skills in reading and writing. The imaginative curriculum enables pupils to make good progress and outstanding partnerships ensure that the expertise of others extends, enriches and supports learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well.

School improvements reflect the quality of the strong leadership and management team; members strive at all times for excellence. Their accurate evaluation of the school and high expectations have helped to create a succinct and ambitious school improvement plan that includes effective monitoring and evaluation. This makes use of a carefully planned system to track pupils' progress. This is working well and welcomed by parents, carers and pupils. However, some changes are not fully embedded to show their impact in a sustained rise in attainment. The school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 by:
 - strengthening the use of writing across all curriculum subjects
 - increasing the opportunities for problem solving and the application of mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are rapidly developing the skills of effective learning. They are aware of the progress they are making and know how to improve their work. Pupils accept that they are responsible for their own learning and most are confident, independent learners. Group work is enjoyed and pupils work well collaboratively. Pupils are well motivated and are usually fully engaged in learning as their work is relevant to their interests. Pupils enjoy the pace and challenge provided by good teaching and achieve well. Their outstanding behaviour contributes well to their learning.

The exceptional progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is beginning to accelerate pupils' progress across the school. This is particularly clear in Key Stage 1 where reading, writing and mathematics are currently above, and sometimes well above, average. In Key Stage 2, progress has not been as rapid as pupils have not benefited as much from all the changes that are currently in place. Therefore, attainment overall is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. English has improved faster than mathematics as there has been a much stronger focus on developing reading and writing skills. Pupils have secure number skills but are less confident in applying them to solve problems. However, stronger teaching and very high expectations are raising attainment. The improving progress of pupils with special educational needs and/disabilities is also making a good contribution to raising attainment. These pupils regularly perform better than their peers nationally and make good progress because they receive teaching that meets their specific needs. While there are some differences in the performance of boys and girls, no significant pattern emerges and, in lessons, both groups show equal commitment to all forms of learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and makes an excellent contribution to their personal development. Pupils serve their school and local community well. Older pupils listen to younger pupils read and play leaders ensure that playtime is a happy and active experience for all. Pupils' views are sought and listened to by staff. The school council is very active in initiating improvements in school, in particular those that promote health, safety and well-being. Pupils make good use of many good opportunities to reflect on their own ideas and beliefs and those of others. They all have good opportunities to experience music, art and singing and regularly meet people from other faiths and cultural traditions. Therefore, they appreciate and respect diversity. This is reinforced by fund-raising which is initiated by pupils and is teaching them the skills of enterprise. Pupils know and understand the importance of good attendance and the majority

attend regularly but a small core resist the school's rigorous procedures and, as a result, attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	3
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	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of pupils' progress data in planning their lessons to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met. They are skilled in ensuring that teaching assistants and other adults in the classroom know their role and understand what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Lessons proceed at a very brisk pace and all pupils sustain interest. Links between letters and sounds are taught skilfully. The school places great emphasis on this which is accelerating progress in reading and writing. Good resources and the use of information and communication technology secure the attention and motivation of pupils who are usually fully engaged in all aspects of the lessons. This is reinforced by good constructive marking and the use of pupils' personal targets. In the very small minority of lessons that were satisfactory, the teacher talked for too long or planning was not sharp enough to secure good progress.

The curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is now effectively tracked against all curriculum subjects. This ensures that identified curriculum weaknesses can be addressed quickly. Curriculum plans clearly identify what each child will receive as their curriculum entitlement as they move through the school. These demonstrate the breadth and balance of the curriculum. Basic skills are given a high profile but there is also strong development of personal skills, culture, sport and enterprise. Activities are supported exceptionally well by visitors, visits and enrichment opportunities that include all Year 5 pupils learning to play the French horn and 'world of work' day. After-school clubs are all offered free of charge and provide pupils with a very wide choice of activities and experiences. The level of pupil participation is very high.

Staff are passionate to ensure that all pupils are happy, comfortable in school and able to participate fully in every aspect of life in school. Parents and carers are very

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

well informed about their children’s progress and school events. Working parents and carers make good use of the before- and after-school care facilities which are well run and reflect the values of the school. The exceptional practice of one-to-one mentoring of all pupils every half term further supports their ability to learn and is highly valued by pupils. Well-documented case studies illustrate the life-changing impact of the work of the school and specialist agencies. This contributes significantly to their future choices in life. The success of the school in reducing the proportion of persistent absentees is a significant example of effective partnerships. The school’s work in managing attendance is good. The fact that attendance has risen to average is a testament to this work. Transition arrangements into and out of school are very thorough and ensure that excellent additional support is provided for vulnerable pupils.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school’s leaders and managers are driven by an ambitious vision of excellence for the school. To this end, all staff have been made accountable for the performance of pupils and this is starting to have a positive impact on attainment. Staff feel that they have been well trained and supported in making this change. Improving attainment is being achieved by strong teamwork with all members of the school community, adults and pupils playing a part. Good school self-evaluation, rigorous improvement planning and staff training, including the modelling of exemplary teaching practice, have been the principal tools. However, a belief that all staff and pupils can improve if the right actions are taken has been fundamental to success. The skilful development of consistency of approaches and of the implementation of change across the school has also been a key ingredient. Improvement is evident but the process has yet to be fully embedded.

The effective governing body is relatively new and is rapidly developing the skills to support the school improvement process. Governors are trained well and are informed about the school. They are increasingly active in school and fully endorse the school’s vision for its future. They ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met; this includes very high-quality safeguarding arrangements. Child protection arrangements are exemplary. The school is a very safe place, all requirements are met and 100% of parent and carers who returned questionnaires recognise that their children are safe in school.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles inclusion effectively. This is reflected in its extensive work to achieve the Stephen Lawrence Standard. Concerted action to promote equality of opportunity has resulted in the good progress of different groups of pupils and the gaps between them are significantly reduced. Community cohesion is carefully planned. As a result, the school forms a cohesive

community and serves its local area successfully. Links with schools nationally and globally provide pupils with a good understanding of communities and culture different to their own.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Children make excellent progress in every area of learning. More-able children achieve especially well. Children are cared for extremely well in a stimulating and welcoming environment. Excellent teaching assistants and two very skilful teachers work as a cohesive team drawing on exemplary planning and well-organised resources. Relationships are superb and expectations are high. Children quickly learn to concentrate on a given activity and work both collaboratively and independently. There is a first-rate balance between children engaged in a focus activity and those choosing their own activity. The indoor and outdoor environments are used imaginatively by children and are outstanding in the quality and range of opportunities offered. An excellent emphasis on speaking skills and work on the links between sounds and letters supports reading and early writing and provides children with a flying start when they transfer to Year 1.

Leadership and management of the provision are extremely strong. Children are kept very safe and all requirements are fully met. Planning to improve provision is of very high quality. Staff work extremely closely with parents and carers and keep them well informed about their children's progress. Teaching assistants observe and record children's progress. This is used systematically to inform assessments and identify priorities for further development.

The school provides day care for some of its Nursery children at different times of the day. During the school day, these children are fully integrated into the Early Years Foundation Stage and benefit from its high-quality provision. Before and after school they join the out-of-school club run by school staff on the premises. This ensures consistent, high quality provision and care.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

An exceptionally high percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and feel well informed about their children’s progress. They identify many strengths including the progress made by pupils, well-motivated teachers, dedicated leadership and the very safe learning environment. One parent typically wrote, ‘The school’s expectations in areas of learning and behaviour are high, yet appropriate and achievable. I think this helps to make the children feel secure, special and worthy.’ These positive views of parents and carers are reflected in the report’s findings.

The small number of negative comments reflected the concerns that some parents and carers have about bullying in school. Parents and carers who were interviewed by an inspector did not identify this as a concern and 100% of responses to the questionnaire agreed that the school kept children safe. Some parents and carers voiced their concerns about mixed-age classes being introduced. Others said they understood the need for mixed-age classes and that it had been handled well. Some parents and carers wanted more help to enable them to help with homework and improved communication methods. The school is aware of this and is looking into it.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at White Laith 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 **141** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	57	53	38	6	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	93	66	48	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	50	68	48	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	50	67	48	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	80	57	56	40	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	53	61	43	2	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	43	74	52	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)	51	36	74	52	9	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	46	69	49	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	37	67	48	18	13	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	32	77	55	16	11	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	66	47	61	43	10	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	59	52	37	5	4	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 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of White Laith Primary School, Leeds, LS14 2BL

I would like to thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to inspect your school. A special 'thank you' goes to the pupils who gave up some of their time to talk to us about their activities. We were very impressed by Year 5 playing the French horn and the wonderful display of some of your work on the Blitz.

You attend a good school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their education. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are broadly average and you are all making good progress. We agree with you when nearly all of you said in your inspection questionnaire that, 'you learn a lot in lessons and adults explain to you how to improve your work'. Your behaviour is exemplary. You all feel exceptionally safe in school and you understand how to keep yourself and others very healthy. Teaching and the curriculum are good while the care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding. Your school is a happy place where you want to learn. Although the school works extremely hard to improve attendance, a few of you could attend more regularly.

We have asked your headteacher to do one thing to improve your school further:

- improve standards in English and mathematics by making sure that in all lessons you all have the opportunity to use and develop your writing and mathematical skills.

With my best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Carmen Markham

Lead inspector

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