

Whittingham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131011
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	395449
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen King
Executive Headteacher	Patricia Davies
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
School address	Higham Hill Road Walthamstow London E17 5QX
Telephone number	020 8523 3228
Fax number	020 8523 2877
Email address	office@whittingham.waltham.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw Additional inspector

Mary Erwin Additional inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 different teachers and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they did. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report, minutes of governing body meetings, reports from the local authority and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 123 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Whittingham Primary is a larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds with 17 different ethnic groups represented. The largest groups are of Bangladeshi, Black African and White British heritage. More than half of the pupils learn English as an additional language, which is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly above average; the majority of these have speech, language and communication difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A privately-run after-school club operates at the school and will be inspected separately. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school has been through an unsettled period, with major changes to the staffing of the school over the last 18 months, particularly at the senior leadership level. An executive headteacher has been in post for a year.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Whittingham is a good school. From very low starting points on entry to the school, pupils make good progress. The school is not yet outstanding because of remaining weaknesses in a minority of the teaching, attainment, middle leadership, and attendance.
- Children make better than expected progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills provides a solid platform for similar good progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. However, pupils’ attainment in mathematics, although improving rapidly, remains below that in English. Pupils enjoy reading and make good progress because it is taught well through an effective and well-structured programme that links sounds to letters (phonics).
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now mainly good, and at times outstanding, because senior leaders monitor it rigorously and provide effective training and support. The progress of underachieving pupils is accelerated by well-chosen support programmes. On occasion the level of challenge does not fully meet the needs of more able pupils, the pace of learning is too slow and pupils’ response to marked work is not monitored sufficiently.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is very good in lessons and generally around school. They are motivated by their work, respond well to the challenge of their targets and consequently enjoy learning. Although attendance is improving it is below average.
- Senior leaders, including the Chair of the Governing Body, provide high-quality leadership, although middle leaders do not yet have a sufficiently wide range of responsibilities. The school senior leadership has successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and consequently the pupils are now making much better progress this year. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills by applying them across the curriculum.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, especially in mathematics, by:
 - improving the pace of learning in lessons
 - ensuring that the more able pupils are appropriately challenged
 - ensuring that the marking of work and the guidance given to pupils are followed up more rigorously
 - providing more opportunities for applying mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders to take greater responsibility for pupils' achievement by:
 - providing training and support as required
 - ensuring opportunities for them to monitor, evaluate and develop the quality of teaching
 - involving them more fully in assessing pupils' progress.
- Build on recent improvements in attendance by working closely with parents and applying the school's policy robustly.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They settle well into school life and make good progress, especially in basic communication skills and mathematics. Overall standards remain below national expectations at the end of the Reception year. Attainment in reading has improved and is now in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because of the good quality of teaching in this subject area. The pupils have a real enjoyment of reading and most say that they read for pleasure outside school. Attainment in English and mathematics dipped at the end of Year 6 in 2011 and progress for this cohort was below expectations. The school leaders responded swiftly and rigorously to address this apparent decline by improving teaching and implementing improved support programmes for any pupils at risk of underachieving. As a result, attainment is, once again, at least in line with the national averages for the Year 6 pupils and there is now evidence of sustained good progress across the school. The achievement of pupils is therefore good.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the work is tailored to their needs and they receive good quality support. The girls have in the past achieved better than the boys in English but the school has addressed this by installing many more 'boy friendly' books in the new library and planning theme work that appeals to the boys. The gaps in literacy outcomes are consequently narrowing. All groups, including those from different ethnic groups, make similarly good progress.

Progress in most lessons observed was good or better. Pupils enjoy learning in

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lessons and teachers plan work that they find motivating. This was particularly true in an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, where the pace was slick, expectations were high, and the pupils were challenged to write diary extracts about appearing in a television talent show. The quality of the vocabulary used by the pupils was exceptionally good; with words like 'exhilarating', 'ecstatic', 'mesmerising', and 'jubilant' being used by the majority of pupils.

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress, have good basic skills and that the school helps them to support their child's learning. One parent wrote typically, 'My son is working very hard now and is doing so much better.' Inspection evidence supports these views.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved significantly over the last twelve months and is now good. The large majority of lessons observed were judged to be good or outstanding. Pupils make good progress in lessons and this has resulted in more consistent progress across the school. In almost every lesson observed, pupils were clear about the learning objective and the small steps in learning by which they could measure their own progress. They are also given longer-term targets for improving their work. Most of the teaching is characterised by high expectations, thoughtful planning, and good use of resources; consequently, the pace in these lessons is slick. In a small number of lessons the pace of learning is slower, and the challenge for the more able pupils is not high enough. Since the new policy was introduced, the marking of pupils' work has improved significantly but there is some inconsistency in the way that teachers follow up the marking to ensure that it is impacting on improving work. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well and provided with work that is well matched to their prior learning, enabling them to progress in line with their peers.

The school's approach to the curriculum has been planned thoughtfully by the teachers. The links established between subjects were very evident in the Year 3 classrooms where there were examples of work from different subjects, such as information and communication technology, art and literacy, arising from a local history and geography study. However, there are missed opportunities across the year groups to extend pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Teaching effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was evident in most of the lessons; motivated by the teachers' encouragement, pupils worked exceptionally well cooperatively, valued the opinions of others, and behaved extremely well because they were highly motivated. A carefully structured programme of support ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well.

A very high proportion of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The inspection findings

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support this view entirely. One parent spoke for many when writing, 'My child really enjoys this school. The staff are welcoming and he enjoys learning and the after-school clubs.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Pupils are extremely polite, confident and very welcoming. They behave very well in lessons and around school, and parents, carers and pupils support this view. Routines are well established in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They show consideration for others and work and play together harmoniously. Pupils are confident that they feel very safe at school and this is also echoed by parents and carers. The inspection again confirms these views. School records indicate that there are very few incidents of bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and they agree that bullying in any form only happens rarely, is seldom serious, and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. Racial discrimination incidents are even less common, because the pupils show mutual respect for each other. New pupils into school say that they are made to feel welcome very quickly and they all say that they settled happily into school life. Pupils have a good understanding of potentially dangerous situations. For example, the school has ensured that the pupils are well aware of safe and appropriate use of the internet.

Attendance had dipped over the last two years to below the national average. The school leadership has again responded rapidly, introducing a new policy that raises expectations. Consequently, attendance has improved significantly but the school still needs to work closely with parents and ensure that the new policy is applied rigorously and consistently.

Leadership and management

The excellent leadership by the executive headteacher and other senior leaders provides a strong and clear direction for the school. The focus has rightly been on a rigorous programme of improvement in the quality of teaching. Although some satisfactory teaching remains, the programme has been very successful and the much improved teaching is now securing pupils' good progress. Information on individual pupils' progress is now being used more effectively to support pupils' learning needs.

The school has recognised the need to extend leadership and management responsibilities to more staff to ensure sustainability of progress and has already put in place a planned programme of support. The governing body has a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and is well led. Not all governors are yet sufficiently involved in monitoring and challenging the work of the school. The curriculum has been reviewed to create opportunities for enjoyable learning that are meeting the needs of the great majority of pupils. The opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum have improved significantly but now need extending to mathematics. The curriculum and the expectations of staff are

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also providing a very effective platform for promoting good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'It's like a family in the classroom – we all help each other.' Teachers create useful opportunities in lessons and in assemblies for pupils to reflect on their learning.

School leaders, governors and staff are successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The school now has effective systems for identifying groups and individuals who need additional support. Successful strategies are provided to accelerate the pupils' learning and close any gaps in their outcomes compared to their peers. School leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The site is secure and all visitors are checked on arrival at the school before they can gain entry. The large majority of parents and carers agree that the school keeps them well informed and responds well to any concerns raised. The inspection team fully supports these views.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and clearly focused on the correct priorities. It stems from an effective programme of monitoring and evaluation and analysis of data. Consequently, the school has been successful in building on strengths and addressing weaknesses. Furthermore, the school's leaders have taken prompt and effective action to reverse the dip in pupils' progress in 2011. This success demonstrates the school's capacity to sustain improvement in the future.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whittingham Primary School, London E17 5QX

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. We enjoyed talking to many of you in lessons, in our meetings with you and at break times. We were pleased with your enthusiasm for your work and the progress you are making, especially in English and mathematics.

We have judged that yours is a good school. You behave very well, get on well together and value each other's cultures and backgrounds exceptionally well. We know from talking to you and from your questionnaires that you like coming to school very much and enjoy your learning. This is because the teachers try to make the work interesting and fun and so you are making good progress. You report that you feel safe at school.

Although yours is a good school, we have asked the executive headteacher, staff and the governing body to make some changes to help it to improve further. We have asked them to provide more opportunities for you to improve your numeracy skills and help you even more by following up the guidance they give you when marking your work. We have also asked them to ensure that more school leaders are focused on improving your progress still further and that there is a good level of pace and challenge for all of you, in all of your lessons. We would also like some of you to improve your school attendance.

We are very confident that you will want to help too. You can do this by trying your best at all times and checking that your work in lessons is as good as expected.

We would like to wish you all the very best in the future at Whittingham Primary School and also when you move on to your next school.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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