

# Wheatley Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114147
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378802
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Frank Cain

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	184
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jayne Dinsdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Pearce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wheatley Hill Durham DH6 3RQ
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Frank Cain  
Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight different teachers and they also looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of the governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff, as well as those from 75 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

The headteacher of Wheatley Hill has been interim headteacher for two years. She works for half of the week in another local school. She was present during the entire inspection. Three new teachers have joined the school in the last two years. Wheatley Hill is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school, with a lower proportion of girls than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school has a dedicated resource base, which caters for pupils with speech and language difficulties. There is a behaviour improvement unit in the school, which is used by ten local schools to cater for pupils facing behavioural difficulties. Most pupils in the school are of White British heritage. A small percentage is from minority ethnic groups. The school does not meet the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has been awarded Rights Respecting Schools Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark 5.

A privately run nursery operates on the school site. This did not form part of the inspection, but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly. It is not yet good because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching, which are preventing pupils from achieving their best. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement over time is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with skills that are low compared with national expectations. Historically, their progress has been slow and their attainment well below average, but now there is rapid improvement across the school because of the determination of all staff to raise achievement. The headteacher has rightly focused teaching on raising achievement through pupils acquiring more secure basic skills.
- Teaching is satisfactory over time. Changes to the curriculum have helped to improve pupils' achievement. In the best lessons, pupils have tasks with high levels of challenge and receive good feedback on their progress. However, this is not consistent across the school. Good use is made of teaching assistants to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs including those in the resource unit often to make better progress than other pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils, including those in the behaviour improvement unit, are helpful and friendly to each other. They are taught to be considerate to others by staff who have high expectations of them. Even when the pace of lessons slows, because of too much teacher-talk, there is very little cause for any concern and pupils' attitudes to learning remain very positive. Attendance has been rising and is now above average.
- At all levels of management in the school there is clear evidence of improvement. Staff feel valued and are being empowered to make decisions. The performance management is leading to improvements in pupils' achievement, and in teaching through professional development. The curriculum is good and has contributed well to pupils' progress accelerating.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment through improving the overall quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
  - allowing teachers opportunities to share good practice more widely across the school
  - reducing the amount of time teachers spend talking to the whole class
  - ensuring that marking consistently identifies the areas where pupils can improve, especially in numeracy
  - giving all pupils sufficiently challenging tasks to develop their understanding.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment has historically been well below average. Currently, however, pupils' achievement and attainment are improving strongly. In lessons, skilful questioning and teachers' good subject knowledge encourage pupils to work well. Pupils' learning in lessons is now often good because they are keen and enthusiastic to be involved and to demonstrate what they are learning. In a poetry lesson, pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, were very keen and proud to read out their work.

Recently introduced routines to track children regularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage show that from low starting points, children make good progress. Learning is active. Singing in French and dancing at the same time is developing children's communication skills as well as promoting self-control and confidence. In the Reception class, pupils are able to describe shapes and point out differences; 'squares are fatter than rectangles', announced one child. Progress for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because work is well tailored to their abilities in the great majority of lessons. Pupils in the dedicated language unit also make good progress. They work well and use technology effectively to aid their learning. Those who are based in the behaviour improvement unit also make the same overall progress as that of other pupils.

Pupils' attainment in reading in Year 2 is average. In Year 6 it is currently at the expected level, representing good progress from the previous year for this year group. Pupils keep a reading log enabling staff to monitor whether books are suitable for their levels of ability. Some older pupils explain the meaning of complex terms, such as 'parody'. One parent pointed out that her child has, 'developed a passion for reading'. In the questionnaire responses, an overwhelming number of parents and carers feel that the school meets their children's needs and that they are making good progress. Inspection evidence confirms that progress has accelerated in the past year, but that achievement overall is only satisfactory.

### Quality of teaching

Teachers use the curriculum effectively to add interest to lessons. For example, in a good literacy lesson, links were made to the current topic on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and the mathematical skills of estimating were woven together to challenge pupils. Pupils very accurately put dates on a timeline with very few prompts to guide them. In a science lesson,

a good link was made to literacy in writing up the experiment. In some lessons, teachers talk too much which limits the time available for pupils to develop their ideas independently. At times, the tasks pupils are given are not challenging enough to promote good progress. Pupils' work is regularly assessed, but feedback is far better at showing them how to improve their work in literacy than in numeracy. In their extended writing books, pupils follow up teachers' comments on how to improve their work and this leads to better progress. Tracking of pupils' progress through the school is now strong, and allows for swift and successful intervention when pupils are seen to be falling behind. Good behaviour is actively expected by teachers and support assistants from the time children enter the school, and this has a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils, particularly those based in the behaviour improvement unit. Group work and 'talking partners' are used constructively to promote good social skills in many lessons.

Parents and carers, along with most pupils, feel that teaching is good and children make good progress in lessons. The teaching observed during the inspection was often good, but its impact over time is satisfactory. In the best lessons, the work is challenging and pupils are given sufficient time to respond in an articulate and thoughtful way. For example, in a literacy lesson where teaching was good, pupils were assembling a Commonwealth fact file, they were able to explain complex concepts, such as 'democracy' and 'equality'. Pupils are taught the sounds that letters represent (phonics) well by teachers and assessed by support assistants, who often make a significant contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils' workbooks are well presented and the teachers give them appropriate learning experiences to develop their basic skills. The good teaching for those pupils with speech and language difficulties helps them to achieve well.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school rarely needs to use the on-site behaviour base for its own pupils as they respond very well to the high expectations of staff and cooperate well in lessons. There have been no exclusions for at least two years and the vast majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and when moving around the school. Most parents and carers are of the opinion that behaviour is good in the school. A few expressed concern about low-level disruption in the classroom, but most feel that the behaviour of a very small minority does not disrupt the learning of the majority routinely. When pupils are fully engaged in lessons, behaviour, including attitudes to learning, is at its best. One pupil said he was now able to manage his own behaviour successfully when he gets annoyed. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are attentive, interested and respectful of each other. Some parents and carers praised the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. One explained that her anxious child was helped to settle in well and now 'skips to school and loves it'.

A small number of parents and carers did raise concerns about the way in which the school deals with bullying, but the school records indicate that there are few recorded incidents and only an extremely small number of pupils raised it as an issue causing concern. They said that it was usually limited to silly name-calling when it did happen. The majority understands the different forms that bullying takes and all know to whom they can turn to if they have a problem. The headteacher has responded to the few parental and carer concerns by recently appointing a new member of the support staff with a focus on supporting behaviour. The vast majority of pupils feels safe in school and knows what constitutes an unsafe situation. Older pupils are very knowledgeable about e-safety and cyber-bullying and a child in the Reception class explained that 'electricity can be

dangerous'. Parents and carers are happy that their children are safe and well looked after. Attendance is above average.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher leads and delegates well and has ensured that the talents of all staff are recognised and developed for the benefit of the pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate, and the school's capacity to improve further is clearly evident from the accelerated progress pupils have made this year. Staff morale is high, because staff at all levels feel supported, as well as empowered, to make decisions. They say that performance management is rigorous but manageable, as the headteacher has streamlined the system and made clear links to professional development. This has led to the improved teaching of phonics across the school. However, leaders acknowledge that more could be done to share the best teaching practice more widely across the school.

The governing body offers appropriate challenge and support to the school's leaders. The curriculum is good and is planned thoroughly to cover all required subjects and skills, with a strong focus on improving literacy. This is evident in many lessons and has helped pupils to accelerate their progress. Visits enhance pupils' experiences, such as to Alnwick Castle. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through most areas of school life. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have explored the culture and food of the East, visiting China Town in Newcastle, and school displays show an appreciation of local history and celebrate the work of popular children's authors.

The school's leaders and managers are successfully promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. It has robust systems for identifying and helping groups and individuals, making this an inclusive school. Adults act as good role models celebrating success, so pupils feel valued and, in turn, behave well. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. The sophisticated electronic signing-in procedures and the good site security, help to reassure both parents and carers and pupils about their safety. The pupils in the language support unit make good progress because of the good teaching and the care and attention they receive. The behaviour unit is well managed and the provision meets health and safety requirements and ensures that children do not fall behind their classmates in their progress.

## 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](http://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 up 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.**



25 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Wheatley Hill Community Primary School, Durham, DH6 3RQ**

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking with you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. You go to a satisfactory school that is improving quickly. We were impressed by your keenness to learn. You are now making better progress and improving the standard of your work by the time you leave in Year 6, so that it is close to that in most other schools. Teaching is improving and we thought your good behaviour was one reason why your school is getting better. Most of you feel extremely safe and secure and state that you learn a lot in lessons.

In order to help you make even better progress and to improve the school further, we have asked the school's leaders, teachers and the governing body to:

- make sure marking of your work shows you how to improve your numeracy skills
- make sure that work in lessons really makes you think
- give you more time to work on your own, rather than spending too long listening to the teachers
- ask teachers to share their good ideas for lessons with other teachers.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school better by working hard and playing together well.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain  
Lead Inspector

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