

Whitehall Primary School

Normanton Park, London, E4 6ES

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's strong leadership is the key to the school's continuing improvement and is ensuring governors are becoming much more involved.
- Leaders carefully check the performance of teachers and provide training so they can meet their targets for improvement.
- Improved teaching is leading to pupils making good and accelerating progress.
- Leaders have successfully improved progress in mathematics, focusing on the pupils' confidence and accuracy when calculating.
- The pupils' writing is becoming increasingly creative and interesting.
- Pupils who need extra help with their learning and those with impaired hearing make the same good progress as others.
- Pupils try to do their best, enjoy coming to school and their attendance is much improved.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and work and play happily together.
- Early reading skills are taught well and the youngest pupils have a good understanding of letters and sounds.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is yet of a consistently high quality.
- In mathematics, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their calculation skills to problems, practical activities and investigations.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in developing wider reading skills.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents and carers and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion and meeting took place between the lead inspector and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Olson Davis	Additional inspector
Jennifer Barker	Additional inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language has risen to well above average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is well above average and rising.
- More pupils than in other schools join or leave part-way through their primary school education.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. This is because the school has specially resourced provision for 21 pupils with hearing impairment, although at the time of the inspection only 17 places were taken up.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to drive forward the pupils' achievement further, increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical situations, to solve problems and to undertake mathematical investigations
 - implementing strategies to develop the pupils' higher-order reading skills
 - developing the questioning skills of teachers and support staff
 - making better use of visual aids to support learning of all pupils but particularly those with impaired hearing
 - ensuring that marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and take the steps needed to reach their targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The pupils' progress across the school is good and improving strongly. Attainment is average and rising as pupils catch up from some past underachievement. Year 6 test results rose in 2012 in all subjects. The very large majority reached standards expected for their age in English and mathematics and a significant minority reached higher levels.
- Children enter the school with skills broadly as expected for their age in most areas of their learning, but lower in literacy and aspects of their personal development. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and their attainment is broadly average by the time they enter Year 1.
- The successful drive to develop pupils' basic skills has helped to improve progress in mathematics. Pupils find methods they trust to help them to calculate and practise these until they can repeat them confidently. However, this repetition can be at the expense of applying their skills in practical situations, to solving problems or undertaking mathematical investigations.
- Pupils write in a wide range of styles and for a variety of audiences. They plan extended pieces carefully by talking about what they intend to write and sharing their ideas with a partner. They use books they are reading together, such as *Goodnight Mr Tom* in Year 6, to stimulate their ideas further. They have many opportunities to develop their writing skills in topics and science.
- Younger pupils make good progress in developing early reading skills. This is based on well-taught sessions to develop an understanding of letters and sounds coupled with regular opportunities to read to an adult in school or at home. More advanced skills such as research, comprehension and understanding text are not promoted as effectively.
- The school successfully ensures that no group of pupils is missing out on recent improvements. Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, those who join late and any new to learning English are all making good progress. The rate of progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with impaired hearing, is also good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Several key strengths in teaching are present in almost all lessons across the school. Teachers manage behaviour well and develop a positive and inclusive climate in their classrooms, enabling lessons to move forward uninterrupted and at a good pace. Assessment is used well to pitch work at the right level for all pupils and support staff are deployed carefully.
- The features of the best teaching were seen when Year 6 pupils made excellent progress in recognising the features of diary writing. The lesson challenged their thinking at all times and drove learning forward rapidly. The teacher reviewed what they had learned earlier and explained the task well so that all pupils were clear about what they had to do. Pupils had the opportunity to discuss and share ideas before committing them to paper. The teacher checked pupils' work as the lesson progressed, providing excellent feedback to help them refine their writing.
- Staff have created a highly stimulating learning environment in the Nursery and Reception classes with resources to support all areas of learning. Practical activities, an emphasis on speaking and listening and plenty of opportunity for the children to decide what they want to learn all contributes to their good progress and to the development of good learning habits.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with impaired hearing, are taught well. The support provided is carefully matched to the pupils' starting points. The multi-sensory approach is particularly effective for hearing impaired pupils. However, there are times when visual resources are not used effectively and so do not improve their learning.
- There are specific reasons why a small minority of teaching does not promote good learning. In these lessons, questioning does not always expect deeper thinking from the more able pupils. There are times when the transition from whole-class to group work is slow.

- Early reading skills are taught well through well-focused sessions teaching letters and sounds. Teachers and support staff work well with small groups in 'guided reading' lessons, but the activities for the remaining pupils are often ineffective in developing more advanced skills.
- The most effective marking shows pupils how well they are doing and how to improve. Occasionally, pupils respond to their teacher's suggestions. However, this is far from consistent and marking is much less helpful in mathematics than in writing. Pupils have individual targets, but progress towards meeting them is not regularly reviewed by their teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are considerate towards others and take on responsibilities proudly, for example helping newcomers to settle in. Pupils are given every opportunity to express their concerns through their school council about behaviour and safety, to which the school responds quickly.
- Pupils have a positive approach to learning. The youngest children learn to share and take turns, which are skills that stay with them as they get older. Pupils' learning benefits considerably when they discuss ideas with each other. Most pupils concentrate hard, although there are times when they lose concentration and become distracted when working on tasks by themselves.
- Records show that incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with swiftly. Teaching in subjects such as personal and social education helps to raise awareness among pupils of the different forms bullying might take and equips them with the skills to take steps to prevent it occurring. Any racist name-calling is mostly thoughtless and pupils are helped to see how hurtful they have been.
- Attendance levels have risen substantially, persistent absence has fallen and punctuality has improved. This is as a result of a 'zero tolerance' policy on holidays in school time, continually making the school's expectations clear to parents and carers, and focusing on pupils causing concern and their families.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's high expectations and dynamic leadership have driven improvements in teaching, achievement and attendance since the previous inspection. Her leadership, the role played by other leaders and the increasingly effective governing body put the school in a very strong position to improve further.
- Teachers' and pupils' performance is continually checked to identify where improvements can be made. Project leaders play an important role in driving forward the school development plan. Priorities, such as in mathematics last year and reading this year, are identified by incisive self-evaluation. This ensures that training is sharply focused on improving each teacher's performance and the impact on the pupils' achievement is carefully monitored.
- Inclusion is high on the school's agenda. Staff strive tirelessly to enable all pupils to meet their potential by breaking down barriers to their learning. Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional staff, individual tuition for specific pupils and focused teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has led to these pupils rapidly catching up with national expectations.
- The leadership of the specially resourced provision is extremely well organised. The highly skilled staff team is continually developing its own practice, for example in audiology skills and speech therapy. The close involvement of parents and carers helps them to develop skills to support their children.
- The curriculum emphasises the development of pupils' basic skills. Subjects are linked through topics to make learning more interesting. The school places great emphasis on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The annual International Day celebrated by the whole school helps pupils understand cultural similarities and differences. The school has made good use of the Olympic values of courage, determination and equality to develop as a legacy 'Be the best you can', to raise the pupils' aspirations.

■ There has been limited engagement lately between the school and local authority. This is partly because of the local authority's reorganisation and link consultants only recently being appointed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is becoming increasingly effective under new leadership and governors offer significant challenge and support to the school
- is fully involved in setting targets for improvement and checking progress towards their achievement
- ensures that procedures to keep pupils safe are rigorously implemented and their impact regularly reviewed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103036
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	400579
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Moran
Headteacher	Jacqui Holder
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 March 2010
Telephone number	020 8529 3813
Fax number	020 8524 7113
Email address	office@whitehall.waltham.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012