

Whitwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112649
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378526
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Geof Timms

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	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Stevenson
Headteacher	Jo Ward
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geof Timms

Additional Inspector

Jo Curd

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 19 lessons, taught by nine teachers, for a total of almost 10 hours, as well as spending other time looking at pupils' work. In addition, meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body, as well as pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of assessment data, policies, reports and planning documents. They analysed the responses to 93 parental questionnaires and others from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. An above-average proportion of the pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British, and very few have minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is below average.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has Healthy Schools status, Activemark, Artsmark, Basic Skills, Investors in People and ECO School awards.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features, especially regarding pupils' behaviour, social and moral skills and in aspects of leadership. Despite its many strengths, the school is not yet outstanding because the teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils receive good guidance or have sufficient opportunities to respond to the guidance they are given.
- Children's progress in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and the use of the outdoor areas has improved since the last inspection. Older pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Attainment is above average and improving.
- Good-quality teaching is having a positive impact on the progress made by all groups of pupils including more-able girls and those known to be eligible for free school meals who made less progress in the recent past. The strong relationships between pupils and all staff are a strength of the school and support good learning. Recent changes to the target-setting process are having a very positive impact on teaching individuals.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. This has a very positive impact on their attitudes towards learning and on how safe they feel at school. Pupils talk very positively about how teachers help them learn new things and how well they get on together. The school has worked hard to raise attendance to above average.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good; some aspects are outstanding. The headteacher provides the school with outstanding leadership and a clear focus on raising achievement, although she does not always put sufficient information about learning in her reports to governors. The governing body does not gather sufficient first-hand evidence about the school's strengths and weaknesses so it can use this information effectively in

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decision making. The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the guidance and feedback given to pupils about their learning are helpful and that they have time and opportunity to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Ensure the governing body has sufficient information about the work of the school through:
 - more detailed reports after governors' visits to the school
 - a headteacher's report that refers more clearly to pupils' learning and progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well and live up to the school's vision of 'Believe, Endeavour, Succeed Together' (B.E.S.T.). They make at least good progress over time and, during the current year, much of the progress is well above that expected. Attainment in Year 6 has been broadly average over the last three years, although the current picture is better than this. Attainment has improved this year to be above average in English and mathematics from starting points that were below the levels expected nationally. This is the result of effective leadership, a new system for setting targets and challenging pupils as individuals, and good-quality teaching.

The work seen in lessons and pupils' books shows that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. In Key Stage 1, standards have risen sharply for the last two years and standards are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school, there are high standards in art and design, and the exceptional quality of much of the pupils' homework supports their learning very effectively. For example, pupils recently designed and made models of Olympic sports stadia and many of these are of outstanding quality. The teaching of reading is good and helps pupils to develop good skills in linking letters and sounds.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, reading skills, including linking letters and sounds, are developing well. Children's attitudes are positive and they clearly enjoy being in school. The skills, knowledge and understanding of children when they start school have been below those expected in the past, but have improved to be closer to expected levels over the last two years. Staff are aware of this and have adjusted their expectations of children's progress accordingly. The school's data show that children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and the current Reception children are close to achieving standards in line with those expected by the end of the year.

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Basic skills are developing well throughout the school. Pupils' understanding of sounds and letters is good, and they enjoy looking at and reading books. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is currently much more rapid because of improvements to the target setting and use of regular assessments. This is enabling teachers to plan for pupils' learning on more of an individual basis. In reading, writing and mathematics, progress in the lessons observed was typically good and attainment often above average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well cared for and make good progress. Interventions are often targeted for a short time with an individual pupil and this has a very positive impact on their learning.

Quality of teaching

Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. The school's records show that this is clearly a sustained and consistent picture and senior leaders' views of the quality of teaching are accurate. The teaching in writing and mathematics has improved rapidly this year because staff provide more individual and one-to-one attention for pupils of all abilities.

Excellent relationships encourage pupils' involvement in their learning. Pupils talk about school very enthusiastically and are especially positive about mathematics lessons and after-school clubs. Behaviour is very well managed so any interruptions to lessons are extremely rare. Pupils are so enthusiastic about their learning that teachers are able to plan some adventurous lessons. For example, in an excellent history lesson in Year 2, pupils used logical methods to explore the characteristics of Greek gods. This led to some deep thinking and philosophical questioning. As one pupil asked, 'If they were so scary why did people worship them?' The teachers manage disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs effectively, and they are well supported through effective interventions as well as in whole-class lessons.

Teachers' marking shows pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. However, the response to this guidance is limited, and too little time is planned for pupils to respond to teachers' comments and the next steps they have identified for pupils to improve their work. Teachers provide a wide range of activities including problem-solving and investigative activities. For example, pupils in Year 6 explored problems involving long division. This work included good use of computers to support their learning. Throughout the school, teachers help pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures and this supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour, and the impact of this on their learning and on the creation of a harmonious community, is outstanding. Their relationships with adults and with each

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other, and their behaviour in lessons and around the school, are consistently excellent. This is evident from parents' and carers' questionnaire responses, school records and observations. The vast majority of the pupils are extremely polite and friendly to those they know and very respectful towards visitors, to whom they enjoy talking. Their outstanding behaviour in lessons aids good learning, and they cooperate and collaborate effectively when the activities give them this opportunity. In Year 1, for example, groups of pupils worked together very maturely to write captions and headings for a local newspaper report linked to their Olympic events the previous week.

Pupils throughout the school enjoy talking about and sharing their work. They told inspectors that the teachers are 'nice and fair' and they all feel really safe in school. They especially enjoyed talking about a recent school visit to a sea life museum.

All of the parents and carers who completed questionnaires say their children are safe and well looked after at school, are making good progress and are developing their basic skills well. These views are supported by the inspection evidence. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are confident that if there was any it would be dealt with well by adults. They talk knowledgeably about safety issues regarding the internet and are confident that there are adults they trust in school and would go to if they had a concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides excellent leadership for all aspects of the school's work. Since taking up the post she has been very well supported by the new leadership team and this is having a very positive impact on raising standards and improving teaching. There is a good team spirit and every member of the staff agrees that they are proud to be members of the school. The senior leaders have a clear vision that is focused on raising standards, and their self-evaluation is accurate and honest.

Teachers improve their practice through focused professional development and opportunities to learn from and work alongside each other. The recent introduction of the target-setting system followed training but has also been adapted sensibly to meet the school's specific needs. This has led to improved standards, especially in writing and mathematics. The school can show this because all staff are familiar with the systems for tracking pupils' progress and these are used very effectively to highlight and address any underachievement. The leadership of literacy and numeracy is effective and leading to improvements in pupils' achievement.

The governing body provides the school with good support and a satisfactory level of challenge. It is not better than this because the governors receive too little information about learning and pupils' progress to support fully their decision making. Visits to school are made to discuss subjects with coordinators, but governors do not provide sufficient information to the full body. In addition, the

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headteacher's report to governors contains a lot of data and statistical information but little about learning. However, the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements fully meet current government requirements.

The good curriculum has recently been improved through highlighting the more creative aspects and making links between subjects. It is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs appropriately. Pupils talk enthusiastically about many of their activities, especially visits, mathematics and their topic work. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions through visitors and visits to different places of worship. This is one way in which the school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many parents and carers take a full part in school life, especially through supporting the excellent homework projects.

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.



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitwell Primary School, Worksop S80 4NR

Thank you for the way you welcomed us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit, reading your questionnaires and talking to many of you. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. This is important because it means the teachers are confident in providing you with interesting work, as well as keeping you safe and happy in school. You are getting better at attending school regularly as well. Keep it up!

Whitwell is a good school. You work hard, and are reaching higher standards than you have in the past. You are fortunate to have so many good teachers and other adults to help you learn. The teachers have worked hard to help you understand your targets and next levels, and what you should do to improve. Next, they need to make sure you have time to understand and respond to their comments so that you are clear about how you can get better.

You receive some good and outstanding teaching. Teachers provide you with interesting things to do and I know you really enjoy your visits and trips – such as that to a Victorian schoolroom or the sea life centre. It was fun reading about and looking at the photographs of your Olympic events as well. You obviously had a great time and learned about some unusual countries.

Your headteacher provides some excellent leadership and is well supported by the other senior staff. We have asked the governing body to do more to understand how well the school is doing, through better reports on their visits and from the headteacher. They are keen to help you do as well as you can and you can help them by continuing to do your B.E.S.T. Thank you again for your friendliness and help. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Whitwell and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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