

Wharton Primary School

Rothwell Lane, Little Hulton, Worsley, Salford, M38 9XA

Inspection dates 24–25 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.

- Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress thanks to the high quality support they are given.
- Extra government funding, provided through the 'pupil premium', is being used well to narrow the gap in achievement between different groups of pupils in school.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and behave well. They are very proud of their school and their own achievements.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes it is outstanding.
- Teachers track how well pupils are doing very closely.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body form a strong leadership group to take the school forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In recent years achievement in mathematics has not been quite as good as in English.
- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, taught by eight teachers, as well as small group sessions led by teaching assistants and the learning mentor.
- They looked at pupils' workbooks during lessons and listened to individual pupils reading in Years 2 and 6.
- They held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance.
- The inspectors took account of the seven responses from parents in the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View) and 12 questionnaires completed by the staff.

Inspection team

Frank Carruthers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional 'pupil premium' funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils given additional help through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils given additional help through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The breakfast club is managed by the learning mentor, support staff and volunteers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what the more-able pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that the subject leader checks that the grouping arrangements for teaching in Key Stage 2 are as effective as possible
 - improving the consistency of marking and feedback to pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding by:
 - sharing best practice in school and in the local family of schools through modelling outstanding lessons and through staff teaching alongside one another
 - improving the quality of teachers' planning to match the best in school
 - ensuring lessons have a brisk pace and pupils are fully involved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are generally below what is typically expected of children at this age. Their skills of communication, language and literacy are frequently well below expectations. Children make good progress in both Nursery and Reception classes, especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- By the time they move into Year 1, most children are at levels of attainment appropriate for their age, though a significant minority are below, especially in early skills of communication and literacy.
- Because of good and often outstanding teaching in Key Stage 1, pupils are now achieving well and making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make is now much better, though some pupils are still making up ground lost in the past.
- Whereas standards in Year 2 have been below average in the past, they have now improved and more pupils are achieving well.
- Thanks to high quality checks on how well pupils are achieving, teachers are expecting more of their pupils in Key Stage 2 classes. More pupils are now making better than expected progress in English and mathematics. This improvement has been gradual since the previous inspection.
- Standards in Year 6 have risen since that time. Most recently, in the summer term 2012, standards in English compared favourably with the average for all pupils nationally. A significant minority reached the higher Level 5.
- The improvement, however, has not been as marked in mathematics. For example, achievement has not been as strong and not enough pupils have been reaching the higher Level 5.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Gaps between the performance of various groups of pupils are narrowing. The pupil premium is being used effectively. Provision for these pupils is very well planned and organised to meet their needs.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Excellent relationships between adults and pupils are a major feature in all lessons. Often, good humour is evident in the best lessons. Pupils are very keen to please.
- A brisk pace, with a wide variety of activities, features in the outstanding lessons. Pupils in Year 2 for instance were engrossed in 'quick-fire' mathematical activities that really stretched them. One pupil rubbing his head commented: 'Oh I'm enjoying this – it's hard and makes me think!'
- In Year 6 English lessons, pupils were writing in a variety of styles, including persuasive pieces, newspaper reports and formal letters. They were so motivated to master the different genres because the topic chosen, 'Superheroes', really caught their imagination. Boys in particular benefited. Recently, boys' writing has significantly improved and in their assessments at the end of the key stage now closely match those of the girls.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and at times outstanding. Staff keep very detailed records of how well the children are developing. They provide a wide range of very interesting activities that the children pursue with much enjoyment.
- Throughout the school, teaching assistants are very well briefed and support different groups in classes very effectively. In addition, they provide high quality additional support for pupils with special educational needs. They benefit from very good leadership by the school's coordinator. As a result, teamwork among the assistants is a real strength. All are involved in assessing the pupils and contributing to decisions about their future progress.
- A small number of lessons requires improvement. Occasionally this is because lesson planning does not clearly define what different groups of pupils are required to do. There are, however,

exemplary lesson plans by other staff which currently are not used as well as they might for other teachers to emulate.

- On occasions, pupils spend too long on one activity and become restless.
- Unlike in English, the standard of marking and feedback to pupils in mathematics is not consistently high across classes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school. This is evident in their very good attitudes in lessons and their involvement in the popular breakfast club and after-school activities.
- There are clear expectations for good behaviour in a code that shows precisely what is acceptable and what is not. Parents report that they are pleased with the way the code, which was introduced last year, has given their children clear guidance.
- Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly as a result and pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. Behaviour in lessons is only rarely less than good, for example, when the pace of learning slows. There is very little disruption to routines and this was evident from lesson observations and school records.
- Pupils report that teachers deal promptly with any suggestion of bullying. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe and about the different types of bullying. They understand the dangers of using the internet. They report that, though there may be squabbles, there is no lasting nastiness.
- The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example, through the work of the school council and the promotion of events for charity. As a result, for instance, the school council is taking full part in the consultations over improvements to the school grounds. In addition, through their charity work, pupils know about the importance of clean water in developing countries.
- Through the work of the learning mentor, the school is very effective in reaching out to parents, offering support to families and children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The impact of this work has been to turn around children who have been unwilling to come to school or take a full part in activities.
- Another outcome has been to help improve levels of attendance and reduce absenteeism. In the last school year, attendance was just above the average of all primary schools.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders provide very strong leadership for the school. The headteacher has established a leadership team whose members take on challenges well. They regularly check on how well the school is doing and how much progress the pupils are making. They have been central to school improvement, especially in relation to teaching and pupils' learning, since the previous report.
- Senior staff check on how well teachers are performing by regular lesson observations. The headteacher in particular has an accurate understanding of how well staff are performing and she records not only strengths but points for improvement in each observation. Her views closely match the findings of inspectors' observations. Follow-up observations focus on how well teachers have addressed earlier shortcomings.
- These observations contribute well to the overall checks on the performance of staff. They are given clear targets to reach, that focus on the achievement of pupils in their class. The end-of-year outcomes are used efficiently to make decisions about the management of their performance.
- Leadership of the curriculum is generally good. Enrichment activities promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The impact of the curriculum on pupils'

learning is regularly reviewed, for instance through pupil interviews. This is good practice. Not as well developed, however, is the way senior staff make sure that the grouping arrangements for mathematics in Key Stage 2 are as effective as possible.

- The local authority provided good support after the previous inspection to help the school to improve. This has been very valuable and now the support is more 'light touch'. The authority's officers have confidence in the ability of the senior leadership to maintain the drive to improve and this view is supported by the findings of inspectors. An example of the school's successful initiatives is the assessment system recently introduced in mathematics, to track how well pupils are doing.
- Staff report they have good opportunities to develop their teaching and managerial skills. The local cluster, or family, of schools has a positive impact on helping teachers to improve their skills.
- The school has used the additional 'pupil premium' funding efficiently and has checked the effectiveness of measures taken to support disadvantaged pupils. For instance, this term the decision was taken to change an earlier approach and employ a newly qualified teacher on a year's contract to release the coordinator for special educational needs. This is with the intention of raising the impact of her role in Key Stage 2.
- All elements of safeguarding pupils' welfare and the safe recruitment of staff are in place. The school promotes equal opportunity for all its pupils and tackles discrimination well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a very clear overview of the school, thanks to members' links with senior staff and subject leaders, as well as regular detailed reports from the headteacher. It is active in supporting the school and challenging senior staff to account for actions taken, and is closely involved in the performance management arrangements. There is a very good range of expertise and experience among its members. They bring real strengths to the work of the governing body. The governing body has been at the forefront of the drive for capital funding to improve school buildings. An example of its good practice is the project to improve the school grounds and facilities for the benefit of the children. Governors have consulted with staff and pupils and written a briefing paper which will become an action plan. Pupils are excited by the venture.

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	105897
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	400808

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Burgoyne
Headteacher	Helen Watson
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2010
Telephone number	0161 790 4473
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