

Whitchurch CofE Primary School

Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 6DA

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Almost all pupils make at least good progress in all their lessons as a result of highly skilful teaching. Teachers expect pupils to do well, whatever their starting points, and plan for this accordingly.
- Standards in reading, writing and numeracy at the end of Years 2 and 6 are rapidly improving and are above national averages.
- Pupils want to succeed. They have a hunger for learning and behave impeccably both in lessons and around the school.
- All pupils feel safe in school and know what to do to avoid potentially dangerous situations.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The inspirational headteacher has assembled a unified staff team in a relentless drive to improve teaching and learning. All the school's leaders are highly effective in achieving this by thoroughly checking teaching and pupil progress.
- The governing body is fully supportive of the headteacher and senior leaders. They are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. They are tenacious and challenging and insist the headteacher explains clearly about the work and life of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and former Chair of the Governing Body, other staff including senior and other leaders, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), two letters, and the school's most recent parental survey.
- The inspector took account of 17 questionnaires completed by all members of staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's own data tracking on pupils' recent progress checks and tests.
- The inspector checked the school's procedures for child protection and safeguarding and evaluated all their relevant policies and procedures.
- The inspector also looked at documentation relating to school planning, setting of performance targets for staff and the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and attendance, and evidence of support for pupils identified as needing extra help.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school although the number on roll is rising rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is well below average although the number known to be eligible for free school meals has increased significantly in recent years.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, those with a statement of special educational needs or those who need extra support at school action plus is above the proportion found nationally although the percentage at school action is broadly average. Their needs relate mostly to specific learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who are known to speak English as an additional language is very low but growing.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than nationally, almost a third of those on roll, join the school at a later starting point than Reception, with many joining well into Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The new Chair of the Governing Body took up his post two weeks before the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons that are outstanding by making sure that the quality of all teachers' marking and feedback matches that of the very best, so that:
 - points for improvement are always linked to next steps in pupils' learning
 - when pupils are asked to respond to written feedback, teachers always make sure they have an opportunity to do this
 - pupils have further opportunities to review their own and others' work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are rapidly improving. In the most recent progress checks and tests they were above the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This equips pupils well for their next stage of education.
- Achievement overall is good rather than outstanding because in the past teaching was not as good as it is now.
- Almost all groups of pupils have made good progress from their broadly average starting points when they join at the start of Reception. This includes those eligible for support from the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Minority ethnic pupils including those for whom English is an additional language have achieved equally well. The effective support they receive including that from highly qualified teaching assistants ensures they have the opportunity in small groups to make fast gains in their learning. Pupils new to the school also make good progress and achieve well from their varied starting points.
- Pupils make rapid gains in their learning in lessons because teachers identify accurately what they need to learn. They then make sure the work set allows them to progress very well to the next stage of their learning. Pupils quickly learn to make decisions about their work and respond well to highly effective questioning.
- Pupils develop reading skills early on. They have opportunities across other subjects, including in numeracy, to develop their reading skills when determining whether they need to add or subtract numbers in order to find the answer. Pupils develop their reading skills early and these are well developed in other subjects, for instance in group discussions and pair work.
- Pupils know how well they are doing through effective feedback from teachers and increasingly from other pupils. Older pupils can find out how well they are doing through the school's pupil tracking system which is available to all parents.
- All parents who responded to Parent View agree their children make good progress in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Much of the teaching is outstanding and it is never less than good. Teachers have very high expectations of all groups of learners. Lessons are very well planned to take account of pupils' different starting points. All pupils are set challenging work including those who find learning easy.
- Pupils gain from lessons that move at a brisk pace and which give them the opportunity to work in pairs and groups to learn from each other. Carefully considered pupil grouping arrangements ensure pupils can move on at the right level. Excellent learning habits are acquired from Reception onwards where pupils are making choices and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers constantly check how well pupils are doing. For example, in one mathematics lesson teachers were ready to move pupils up or down a group midway through a lesson if they

thought pupils were ready for the next step or needed further reinforcement of their learning.

- Teachers are consistent in providing written feedback to pupils on how they can improve. Pupils have the chance to respond with their own comments and are very positive about its usefulness. Occasionally development points are not sufficiently clearly linked to the next steps pupils need to make. One or two teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to respond to comments, or to review other pupils' work.
- Teaching assistants play a significant role in pupils' learning. The quality of their training and experience means they can work with pupils of all levels of ability, including higher achieving pupils, to ensure they do as well as they can.
- Topic work such as that on pirates is absorbing for all pupils. It prompts them to develop an interest in literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage where a range of interesting and stimulating literacy activities inside and outside attract boys as well as girls. In Key Stage 2 all groups of pupils including those in lower sets can identify and use different genres of writing, for example factual newspaper reports.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed their children are taught well in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils take responsibility for managing their own behaviour and set themselves very high standards. They are so enthusiastic about their learning that when given the opportunity to be 'headteacher for a day' they chose a day studying art which they are now responsible for organising.
- Attendance has rapidly improved and is now above average. Pupils arrive promptly at school and show from their enthusiasm that they are keen to learn.
- There is no misbehaviour or disruptive behaviour in lessons. Pupils cooperate well with each other and willingly offer to work with others to help them with their learning. Relationships between pupils and adults are also very good.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying but report that bullying is exceptionally rare. Behaviour incidents over the last three years have been equally few. No racist incidents have been reported and there have been no exclusions. Pupils are able to learn in an atmosphere free of any discrimination or name calling.
- Almost all pupils are confident of reporting incidents on the playground secure in the knowledge they will be dealt with, although no pupil spoken to has ever had to do so. Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school and willingly take on responsibilities such as tour guides for visitors.
- Pupils know exceptionally well how to keep themselves safe. The school's proximity to the river ensures pupils are made aware of the dangers of water and all have learnt to swim by the time they leave school. They also know of other risks and know what to do in potentially unsafe situations when using the internet.
- All parents who responded to Parent View were unanimous that their children are happy and feel

safe at school and almost all agreed that the school makes sure pupils behave well and deals effectively with bullying.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher the school has improved quickly. It is now over-subscribed and popular with parents. Almost all of those responding to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff and a desire to raise standards further. This was seen in the unanimous positive comments of staff in their survey, all of whom strongly agreed they were proud to be a member of staff and many commented positively about the teamwork and leadership in the school. There is a 'can-do' culture running through the school which has led to improvements in teaching and learning.
- Leaders at all levels know the strengths and areas for development very well. The headteacher has successfully shared leadership among the staff to ensure there is not overdependence on one or two key leaders only. The arrangement of joint coordinators for literacy and numeracy is working very well to ensure continuous improvement in the future.
- Leadership of these and other aspects including Early Years and special educational needs are outstanding. Leaders know their aspects and subjects very well through accurate checking of teaching and pupil achievement and are highly effective in bringing about improvements.
- Senior and other leaders are highly committed and use data well to analyse how well pupils and groups are doing in their subjects. They are fully involved in an extensive programme of checking the quality of teaching and this has also led to improvements through pupil progress meetings which also focus on teaching and learning.
- Leaders and the teachers themselves are able to judge teaching accurately. They recognise the features of outstanding teaching and there is a close link between teachers' pay and the quality of teaching. Targets set for teachers have led to improvements in their lessons. Teachers thrive on receiving feedback and then acting upon points for development.
- The local authority has supported the school exceptionally well as the school has sought to improve teaching and learning. It has an accurate view of the school and has provided challenge through a review of teaching and learning with clear targets for improvements.
- The school works very effectively through the Wye Valley partnership of schools to share ideas, training opportunities and to help and support each other. This has led to improvements in key aspects of the work of the school.
- Funding for pupil premium has been targeted well from the school's detailed tracking systems by identifying pupils who need extra help. Pupils have been set work at the right level to help them catch up. The school has extended the hours of its highly skilled and experienced teaching assistants to provide additional support and small group teaching. Consequently all pupils who received extra help, including those eligible for the pupil premium, have done very well in reading, writing and numeracy.
- The school prepares pupils very well for their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through the subjects taught, assemblies and the wide range of after school activities. Teachers make extensive use of the local areas' outstanding beauty to develop in pupils a sense of awe and wonder in nature. Pupils have regular opportunities to meet pupils of other faiths and

backgrounds and leaders have ensured the school is free from discrimination.

- The school has ensured its safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous and meet all statutory requirements and provide useful guidance to all visitors on arrival at the school. All staff are well trained in child protection.
- Almost every parent who responded to Parent View agreed the school is well led and managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is very knowledgeable and well informed in educational matters, which places it in a strong position to challenge the school and hold its leaders to account.
 - shows exceptional care and support for the welfare of the headteacher and all staff and concern for their work-life balance.
 - governors know the school’s strengths very well and what still needs to be done. They are in school often including in lessons. Their links with subject coordinators enable them to know about how well pupils are doing in each subject and how effectively leaders and coordinators are carrying out their roles. They know how pupil premium funding has been spent and the reasons for the choice of spending. When visiting lessons governors see the impact of the funding through the highly effective work of the teaching assistants.
 - the governing body is fully aware of its responsibilities regarding teachers’ pay and systems for setting targets for teachers; the headteacher is held to account by the specific and challenging targets set for her.
 - the governing body is fully trained to ensure it carries out its statutory duties for safeguarding very well.

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	116919
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	403302

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Hallett
Headteacher	Claire McKeown
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2008
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