

# Whitehouse Common Primary School

Cotysmore Road, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6BL

## Inspection dates

13–14 November 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Senior leaders and the governing body are relentless and successful in their drive for further improvement. Teaching has improved considerably in the past two years. Achievement is improving and more able pupils, in particular, are reaching ever-higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils very much want to learn and what they are given to do helps them to learn well. All pupils are now making at least good progress in all subjects.
- Attainment is well above average and has been for several years in reading, writing and mathematics. The excellent progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage sets them up well for this.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Their attendance is consistently above average. All of these things have improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are taught well, and teaching is often outstanding. Staff readily rise to the high expectations their leaders have of them, and they very much appreciate the support they are given to improve their teaching. This has led to much better use of assessment to make sure work is at the right level for all pupils.
- Staff constantly check that pupils know and understand how well they are doing. This is helping pupils to improve their own work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although progress is good in mathematics, and rising, it is not as good as in English. This is because, when they mark pupils' work in mathematics, teachers are not as specific as they are in English, about what pupils need to do to improve.
- There is no clear expectation that pupils will do corrections in mathematics and therefore learn from their mistakes.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 31 lessons, five of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Play and lunchtimes were also observed and the before- and after-school club was visited.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, including those with management responsibilities, the school's adviser from the local authority, and the school improvement partner.
- The views of 73 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. Other parents' views were sought at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation form. They also examined the work in pupils' books.

## Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Damian Booth	Additional Inspector
Nicola Southall	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.
- The school has its own before- and after-school club, known as the Happy Hometime Club.
- There have been several changes of staff since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up post in January 2009, followed shortly afterwards by a new assistant headteacher in September 2009 and a new deputy headteacher in September 2010.

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

- Improve progress in mathematics by:
  - sharpening teachers' marking in that subject so that pupils are always clear about how to improve
  - giving pupils time to respond to marking and insisting that they do corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Attainment on entry is now slightly below expectation for the children's ages. At the last inspection, it was slightly above. Children, including those joining Reception from other nurseries, learn and develop really well during Reception. Attainment is above average as they start Year 1.
- Above-average attainment has been sustained in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 for several years. The proportion of more-able pupils reaching the extremely high Level 6 was above that found nationally in 2012. Achievement in mathematics is rising quickly.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the improved practical work that is now giving mathematics a real-life context. In Year 4, for example, because work was at the right level for each pupil, their understanding of how to read and plot coordinates on a map was greatly improved. When asked if they found the work hard, pupils said 'Yes, but we like a challenge'.
- The more competitive element built into learning multiplication tables is increasing pupils' ability to calculate rapidly. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in subjects such as science and geography. All of this is helping to accelerate their progress further.
- Pupils read extremely well. They read accurately, correct their mistakes, and understand what they read. They enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction texts, and use many strategies to help them read unfamiliar words, including their excellent knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics). The outcomes of the new national tests to assess Year 1 pupils' understanding of phonics were similar to those found nationally. However, when heard reading, the pupils demonstrated phonics skills above those expected for their age.
- Pupils' writing grabs the reader's attention and is mostly easy to read because spelling, punctuation and grammar are usually accurate, and handwriting neat and legible. Pupils use their good range of vocabulary well to create mood and atmosphere, for example, in poetry. They use their literacy skills well in different subjects, consolidating and extending them in different ways.
- Pupils in danger of underachieving receive good support to keep their learning on track. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support from teachers and well-trained teaching assistants. As a result, their progress is good. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are assisted by staff who make sure they understand new vocabulary and use it well. Therefore, all groups of pupils achieve well.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is often inspirational. Lessons are well planned, and pupils are given work that is at the right level for them. This work deepens their knowledge and understanding across all subjects.
- Links to earlier work also ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve in lessons. Pupils say their targets help greatly in this. They work equally well independently, with a partner or in a group, and use the well-organised displays in all classrooms to check their learning and move it on.

- Teachers often stop lessons and ask pupils to identify what new learning they have gained in the last five minutes, and lessons usually end with pupils reviewing how well they have learned overall. Teachers use the information gained really well to correct misconceptions quickly, and to plan what needs to come next.
- Excellent relationships ensure pupils can ask as well as answer questions to clarify their learning. For example, pupils confidently asked what 'plot' meant in relation to graph work, having previously understood 'plot' in relation to writing a good story.
- Reading, writing and communication skills are taught very effectively. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics are now securing good progress in that subject too, including through a greater focus on using and applying mathematical skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers mostly question and probe pupils' learning well, constantly moving it on. In the best lessons, different, and extremely well-judged ways of teaching move learning on rapidly and make it very enjoyable for the pupils. An example was the use of drama to increase Year 1 pupils' understanding of how to organise and use instructions.
- Despite all of the above, inconsistencies in marking mean that opportunities are still missed to show pupils how to improve their learning. Marking is weakest in mathematics. While teachers sometimes pose questions for pupils to consider, the questions do not always focus on weaknesses in learning that need to be addressed. Also, pupils are not consistently required to do corrections or respond to marking comments.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils build up resilience and the ability to persevere, along with high levels of respect for each other and adults, right from Nursery. The school's approach to helping pupils persevere, show resilience and help each other or work independently has a very beneficial impact on learning.
- Pupils very much appreciate the consistent approach to managing behaviour adopted by every member of staff. They praise the school for awarding consistently good behaviour as well as behaviour which has improved. They say this makes everyone feel valued.
- The school council gives pupils a strong voice in the school and the eco council promotes sustainability well. Pupils say, 'We should become more responsible as we get older', and relish opportunities to take responsibility. They share the joy in each other's success, and readily help each other to succeed.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they check whether visitors are wearing badges, and learn how to ride their bikes safely to and from school. They say, 'Teachers keep us safe by ensuring rules are obeyed'. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet or other forms of modern technology.
- Pupils are very clear about what bullying is and are extremely proud that their school has been designated a 'bully-free' zone. They talk of how persistent name-calling, threatening, and physical violence could cause others unnecessary distress. They say these are very rare in the school and that, although 'mishaps' (rather than poor behaviour) sometimes happen, they are dealt with 'very quickly'.

- Pupils know their targets well because they contribute to them through reviewing their work with their teachers and looking at ways to improve it. They say their teachers always try to 'push them to do really well and reach high levels'.
- The school creates a vibrant, exciting and safe environment for the pupils that results in much enjoyment in learning and consistently above-average attendance, year on year. The 'Happy Hometime Club' provides interesting, stimulating activities for pupils of all ages before and after school.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The school leadership strives for excellence in all aspects of school life. It is very well placed to sustain the currently high standards and improve teaching and learning further. It has a very strong grip on the development needs of individual members of staff. It meets these needs exceptionally well through challenging performance management objectives that are closely linked to accurate self-evaluation and the priorities that arise from it.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is benefitting hugely from teachers being able to share and learn from good practice in school and across the group of schools with which it works. Staff readily accept and act on advice given. They speak highly of how well the school leadership supports them. Morale is high and teamwork very strong as teachers strive to do their best for the pupils. The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- Very-well-planned topic work takes account of what pupils say they would like to learn. It includes many opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all learning. Alongside the excellent programme for personal development, it turns pupils into confident young citizens, well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have many excellent opportunities to reflect on their learning and link it to everyday events. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. It ensures that all pupils can participate in all activities, in and beyond the normal school day.
- Parents are very positive about the school and what it does for their children. Inspectors investigated the few concerns that some parents expressed. When they are within the school's control, it does everything possible to resolve them.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body knows this is a good school because it monitors pupils' progress closely, understands performance data, and regularly visits the school to gain first-hand information about teaching and learning. This knowledge is further enhanced by presentations from staff and pupils at governing body meetings. The governing body fully understands its role in managing teachers' performance, and contributes very effectively to decisions about salary progression. It ensures pupil premium money is spent wisely, for example, to train support staff and to allow pupils at risk of underachieving to be taught or supported away from class when necessary. This is helping to close the gaps in these pupils' learning. The governing body is vigilant in ensuring safeguarding requirements are fully met. For example, all governors as well as all staff have been vetted, as have the contractors working on the school site. The governing body seeks out and attends relevant training to keep its skills up-to-date.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132007
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	403639

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

<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>	485
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Crosson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4641918
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