

Whitecotes Primary School

Whitecotes Lane, Walton, Chesterfield, S40 3HJ

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress requires improvement in English and mathematics. Despite recent improvement, their achievement is not yet good.
- In a few lessons, pupils waste time working on things they can already do. Work set is not at the right levels, particularly for pupils who are of average ability.
- In some lessons, teachers do not probe pupils deeply enough to check precisely what they have learnt.
- Pupils do not always know how well they have done in lessons and how they could improve their work.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise their speaking skills.
- Spelling needs improvement. So does the way some pupils use grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to use their calculation skills in working out mathematical problems.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership and management are now good. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are rising.
- Under the leadership of the new Chair, the governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and is supporting and challenging the school.
- Teaching is improving. More teaching is now good and it has some outstanding elements.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school.
- A good range of interesting activities, such as sport and outdoor visits, extend and enrich the breadth of pupils' learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know that adults would listen to any concerns.
- Attendance continues to improve and is currently above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. One lesson was jointly observed with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a randomly selected group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority, as well as senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's own data concerning pupils' current and recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire together with the school's own evidence of parents' views, which it had collected over time.
- Inspectors also considered 27 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steve Rigby	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is higher than average, while the proportion of those at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very large majority of pupils are White British. A very small minority come from a range of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support certain pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision (none of its pupils are taught elsewhere).
- The headteacher took up his post in May 2011 and has been unavoidably absent since October 2012. The current Chair of the Governing Body took up her position in July 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is good or better, so that an increasing proportion of pupils, particularly those of average ability, make good progress, by ensuring teachers:
 - set work that is at the right levels for all groups of pupils
 - move pupils to the next stage of their learning at a brisker pace
 - ask skilful questions to check and to deepen pupils' understanding of what they have been learning in lessons
 - help pupils to know how well they are doing and how they could improve their work.
- Improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - regularly building up pupils' speaking skills so that they are able to express themselves clearly and confidently
 - ensuring pupils write with greater grammatical accuracy and spell high frequency words with increasing accuracy
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in solving practical and real-life problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good as they move through the school and requires improvement. It is improving and there is more good progress now. Pupils perform better in mathematics than in English.
- Children join Reception with skills that are usually below those expected for their age and achieve well. Standards are steadily rising but remain broadly average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In 2012, for the first time over many years they were above average. This group of Year 6 pupils performed well, particularly in mathematics, almost all reaching the expected level for their age.
- Progress in reading is improving. The teaching of phonics (learning about the sounds that letters make) is regular and is now extended to older pupils. A higher proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in the national phonics test than pupils nationally.
- Pupils' writing is improving but progress is slower. Although pupils can organise their writing, their work shows their grasp of sentence structure and punctuation is insecure and they do not always spell common words accurately.
- Pupils' progress in developing speaking and listening skills requires improvement. They are not good at developing an idea and giving their views because they do not get enough opportunities to practise.
- Pupils enjoy working with numbers and their progress is strong in this area of mathematics. However, they are not so good at using their number skills to solve problems.
- Some pupils of average ability make slower progress. Work given to them is not always at the right level to speed up their progress and they spend time doing things which they can already do.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to their peers. The additional help they get in or out of classrooms is carefully targeted to meet their varying needs.
- In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved lower standards in the Year 6 tests than those not eligible for extra funding, and the gap in the points each group gained was larger than nationally. However, current data shows that they are beginning to make faster progress to close the gap. This year the pupil premium monies are being used to provide extra help to cater for their specific learning needs and this is making a difference.
- The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups make at least the expected progress. Those who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress because improving their competence in English is the teachers' overriding priority.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and more teaching is now good. However, teaching still requires improvement because it is not good in all classes and does not ensure all

groups of pupils achieve well, particularly those of average ability.

- In lessons which are not yet good, teachers do not ask probing questions to extend pupils thinking and pupils do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they could do next to improve their work. Work is not pitched at the right levels to enable all pupils to make the best possible progress. As a result, the pace at which they learn suffers.
- Typically, teachers expect pupils to work hard in lessons. Their planning clearly indicates what they expect pupils to learn and the part that teaching assistants will play during the lesson. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to work with others and to hone their social skills. In most lessons, teachers maintain pupils' interest.
- In the best lessons, teachers' explanations are precise and reflect their confident subject knowledge. The checking of pupils' progress and understanding in these lessons is outstanding and teachers' comments on what pupils have actually achieved are highly constructive. Teachers are alert to mistakes pupils make and intervene judiciously.
- Marking has improved and teachers now invest a great deal of time in commenting on pupils' written work. In the best examples, teachers point out what pupils have done well and what they need to improve. Pupils find teachers' guidance helpful in improving their work.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for pupil funding is geared towards improving their basic skills and their fuller participation in all learning activities. Teachers and teaching assistants provide extra support through small group tuition and one-to-one interventions, and they provide a range of enrichment experiences. This additional support is beginning to close the gap in the attainment of these and other groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to their work are positive and they work hard in lessons. Only occasionally, when teaching does not capture their interest, some lose concentration and the pace of learning slows.
- Children in Reception keenly move around sensibly and enjoy their freedom when they work and play on their own.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are aware of what adults in the school expect of them. Staff manage behaviour well and they give pupils a clear sense of what is acceptable and what is not.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They know that adults in the school are always on hand and will listen to their concerns and worries.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and it is promptly dealt with, when and if it occurs. They are aware of the forms it can take, including that which is prejudice-based and that which arises from the use of the internet.
- Attendance is above average and the efforts made by senior leaders in promoting regular attendance continue to pay off.

The leadership and management are good

- Since his arrival at the school, the headteacher has brought about considerable change. As a result, there is now more good teaching and pupils' progress is stronger. In his absence the deputy headteacher and middle managers continue to drive improvements forward. There is a strong trend of improvement.
- The current priorities of the school are the right ones and demonstrate strengths in its self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- Pupils' progress is regularly analysed. This information is used to decide on extra help needed for those who have special educational needs and others who are supported by pupil premium funds. Senior leaders and governors are determined to secure equality of opportunity for these groups, although they recognise not all of them yet make consistently good progress.
- Performance management systems are directly linked to pupils' achievement and emphasise the need to take achievement into account as when deciding teachers' pay. The extensive training programme provided within the school, or off-site, effectively contributes to the improving quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy.
- Mostly teachers plan for English and mathematics as separate subjects, but link different subjects into combined themes to create more interest in pupils' learning. The provision for music, sport and art, and educational visits and knowledgeable visitors enrich pupils' experience and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school fosters good links with parents and keeps them informed about their children's progress.
- The school's senior and middle leaders have drawn on effective practical support from the local authority. This has included consultants in literacy and numeracy. The school has also secured the services of experienced teachers from other schools to improve its quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the leadership of the new Chair, the governing body supports and holds senior leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and a growing awareness of the detail of its weaknesses. They look into information about pupils' progress and understand how well the school is doing in relation to other similar schools. The governing body has ensured that arrangements are in place to establish links between teachers' performance and their progression through the salary structure. It manages the school budget well and has taken the necessary steps to manage the deficit due to overdue salary settlement. Governors have a good grasp of how pupil premium funds are being used to provide additional support for eligible pupils and whether the support has been effective. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Its members bring a range of professional skills, which are useful in supporting senior leaders. They are ready to access any further training that will help them to check robustly the work of the school.

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	112775
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401304

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellie Reynolds
Headteacher	Ross Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2009
Telephone number	01246 234381
Fax number	01246 208519
Email address	headteacher@whitecotes.derbyshire.sch.uk

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