

Whittington CofE Primary School

Whittington, Worcester, WR5 2QZ

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

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.

- Good leadership, good governance and the commitment of all staff have helped the school to improve since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The school tracks pupils' progress carefully and provides good support for those who need it to prevent them falling behind.
- The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. At times, it is outstanding.
- Teachers manage their classes well and teaching assistants provide good support.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to help pupils with their learning.
- Pupils behave well throughout the school. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and say that it is a friendly place.
- The level of attendance is well above the national average.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school and are working hard to bring further improvement in teaching and achievement.
- There is a rigorous system for keeping a check on pupils' progress and for providing additional support for those who need it.
- The school provides a good range of additional activities which enrich learning.
- Governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and hold staff to account for the quality of education they provide.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to detail when marking pupils' work.
- Pupils do not always take enough care with the presentation of their work.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to develop as truly independent learners.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 20 lessons, observing all classes at least twice for varying lengths of time. Seven of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- They held discussions with a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, most of the teaching staff, and groups of pupils.
- They looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, data regarding pupils' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs.
- They scrutinised pupils' written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- They took into account the views of 46 parents and carers recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parents' views, as well as the results of a survey of parents' views carried out by the governing body. They also considered written communications from a number of parents and had informal discussions with nine parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also considered the views of six members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graham Sims, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement even further by ensuring that:
 - pupils' work is marked regularly and with greater attention to detail and that pupils use teachers' comments to improve their work
 - pupils are given greater opportunity to use their initiative, to develop as independent learners, and to determine what they are to research and write about and how they might present their findings
 - teachers encourage all pupils to take care when presenting their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has responded well to the issues identified in the previous inspection and pupils' achievement has improved as a result. Pupils are making good progress in all classes. Standards have risen most noticeably in mathematics, and more pupils than ever before are reaching standards which are above those expected for their age in both English and mathematics.
- Children's skills, knowledge and abilities are in line with those expected for their age when they join the Reception class, although they are weakest in aspects of language and literacy and in physical development. They make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development, and start Year 1 with skills which are slightly better than those expected for their age.
- In 2012, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average. At the end of Year 6, they were well above average in English and just above in mathematics. Since then, pupils have continued to respond with enthusiasm to the more demanding work which is evident in all classes as teachers have sought to raise the bar. Standards are continuing to rise and the progress of the more-able pupils in particular is continuing to improve.
- The progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium is similar to that of other pupils. There are variations; a few make slower progress than their peers, others make faster progress.
- The school tracks the progress of all pupils, including those receiving the pupil premium, very carefully. It has used this funding to provide additional support to any who might be in danger of falling behind. In 2012, the very small number of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 who were eligible for free school meals actually achieved higher standards in English and mathematics overall than other pupils.
- Progress in reading has been good for a number of years. Well-taught lessons in which pupils are taught the links between sounds and letters (phonics), and regular opportunities for younger pupils to read individually to an adult give pupils secure reading skills. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils enjoy reading and read widely.
- A greater emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' problem-solving skills and their ability to do quick mental calculations, together with a greater level of challenge, has helped pupils' progress in mathematics to come on in leaps and bounds. Pupils also make good progress in writing, especially where teachers give them time and opportunity to redraft their work.
- Achievement is not outstanding because teachers do not yet pay sufficient attention to detail in pupils' work or give them enough scope to use their own initiative. Sometimes, errors are not corrected or there is a lack of challenge in the feedback on pupils' work. Pupils' presentation of their work is, at times, untidy and this leads to unnecessary errors.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good and some is outstanding. It has improved since the last inspection because there has been a strong focus on ensuring consistent practice throughout the school and providing work that is hard enough to ensure pupils of all abilities progress well.

- The teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils respond with maturity and determination to the challenges they are given. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5, for example, pupils beavered away at the mathematics investigation set by the teacher and were determined to move on to the extension work which provided an even greater level of challenge.
- Teachers manage their classes well. Occasionally, some of the younger pupils take too much time to settle to their individual tasks, but older pupils know what is expected of them and work diligently when asked to work on their own. Throughout the school, pupils work well together when discussing issues as a small group or with a partner.
- Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are used effectively to support small groups of pupils. At times, this may be a group of more-able pupils, at others a group of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs or those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding. Tasks are planned effectively and match the needs of the various groups well. Occasionally, teaching assistants' time is not used to best effect during whole-class teaching sessions.
- The quality of teachers' marking has improved since the previous inspection, but still varies from class to class and also from one piece of work to another. There are plenty of examples where the teacher indicates where and how pupils can improve their work, and where pupils respond to the teacher's comments by redrafting their writing or making corrections. There are, however, still too many occasions when the marking does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils or help them to understand how they might improve their work.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning. Its use is particularly effective, for example, when older pupils use a word processor to produce their writing and then amend it in the light of their teacher's comments to produce a final draft.
- Teachers do not yet exploit the pupils' good ability to work independently and without direct supervision by providing them with assignments and challenges which require them to use their initiative and think deeply. Because almost all of the work is closely directed by the teacher, pupils rarely get the opportunity to pursue independent lines of enquiry, to determine what they are to research and write about, or to choose how they might present their findings.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good development of children's social skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage lays a good foundation for the rest of their primary education. There is a positive, friendly environment and good behaviour throughout the school. Pupils are polite and courteous and show consideration towards each other.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They participate enthusiastically in class and, as they move through the school, develop a good ability to concentrate on their work. Older pupils demonstrate a good level of responsibility when asked to work on their own or in small groups with minimal supervision outside the classroom.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying and racist incidents are very rare occurrences. They say that there is the occasional 'falling out' but that friendships are quickly restored. They demonstrate a good awareness of different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They say they feel very safe in school because everybody is friendly, the teachers are

helpful and the site security has improved.

- Pupils' positive attitudes to school are shown in their very good attendance, which is well above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership from the headteacher, other leaders and the governing body have improved the school since the last inspection. Excellent teamwork and a strong determination from all staff have ensured there is good morale and a common sense of purpose: all have contributed to the school's drive for improvement and played a part in improving pupils' achievement. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school and identify appropriate priorities for further improvement.
- The most notable improvements have been to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing. These have been brought about by effective management of teachers' performance, good professional development and regular checking by leaders of the quality of teaching and pupils' work.
- The school has received helpful support from the local authority which has kept a careful check on the school's performance since the last inspection. The local authority has been particularly effective in helping the governing body to understand its role more clearly and in providing guidance for the headteacher.
- Systems for keeping a check on pupils' progress have become much more rigorous. Pupils' progress is checked twice a term. The headteacher holds termly meetings with each class teacher to discuss pupils' progress, to identify any pupils who are falling behind and to agree on ways of providing additional support.
- The small amount of pupil premium funding which the school receives is used effectively to provide additional support for those who need it and to ensure pupils do not miss out on additional activities, such as school trips. As a result, all pupils are given every opportunity to succeed and almost all are reaching the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The responses on Parent View and some correspondence indicate that a small minority of parents and carers are concerned about safety, behaviour, bullying, and the way the school is led and responds to their concerns. The inspection team investigated the way the school had dealt with a recent incident and found that it had followed procedures correctly and dealt with the matter appropriately. The team felt that views recorded on Parent View at the time of the inspection did not provide a fair reflection of the way pupils feel about their school, the improvements which have been made over the last two years, pupils' good achievement and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- The school provides many ways for pupils to enrich their learning and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include: the teaching of French; opportunities for all pupils to learn to play musical instruments in Years 3, 4 and 5; involvement in a wide range of sports and competitive activities; special events; themed days and residential visits. On the second day of the inspection, for example, all staff and pupils dressed up as fictional characters to celebrate World Book Day, leading to much fun and enjoyment and good opportunities to discuss the many characters.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has improved markedly since the last inspection as a result of training and a searching review of the way the governing body functions. Governors have a very clear understanding of their roles and are actively engaged in supporting the school and holding the headteacher and staff to account for the quality of education provided. Separate working groups gain good insight into key areas of the school through well-organised visits to the school. Governors have an excellent understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. They are fully aware of how teaching is being improved and the performance of individual staff and ensure that any increase in pay reflects additional responsibility or impact on achievement. They keep a careful check on how the pupil premium funding is used and how effective it is in raising the performance of those pupils for whom it was intended.

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	116856
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	405673

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	
Number of boarders on roll	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Newell
Headteacher	Gary Richards
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2011
Telephone number	01905 354844
Fax number	01905 350868
Email address	head@whittington.worcs.sch.uk

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