

# Whitley Village School

Village Lane, Lower Whitley, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 4QH

## Inspection dates

13 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Outstanding leadership and management have significantly raised pupils' achievement by ensuring better teaching since the previous inspection, despite substantial disruption to staffing.
- Achievement and teaching continue to improve through the clear leadership provided by all the teaching staff and the very effective governing body.
- Progress has been particularly strong in writing over the last year because staff have focused on this aspect of pupils' learning.
- Extensive work with the partner school in the federation has greatly supported the many improvements in the last two years.
- Staff keep a very close eye on the progress of each individual pupil, and intervene swiftly with extra help if any starts to fall behind.
- Pupils' behaviour has also improved and is exemplary. Pupils of different ages get on extremely well together. They greatly enjoy learning as well as the social aspects of school. They work together exceptionally well in class.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and enjoy all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make achievement outstanding.
- Although teachers routinely prepare different work for pupils of different abilities, sometimes this is not done accurately enough and a few pupils have tasks that are too hard or too easy.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils work their way through the same tasks as the rest of the class before tackling work that is more challenging.
- Progress in mathematics, although good, is not as consistently strong as in English; pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems in mathematics lessons.
- Pupils' written work is marked regularly, but teachers' comments do not always explain just how well pupils have done, or tell them clearly how to improve in the future.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons taught by four members of staff. Three of these were qualified teachers; the other was a higher-level teaching assistant. Two of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Short observations were also made of younger pupils learning phonics (how the letters in words represent different sounds). Several pupils were heard reading.
- Discussions were held with four representatives of the governing body and with members of staff, including all the teachers. Inspectors also talked about their lessons to the members of staff who had been observed teaching.
- Inspectors met formally with the pupils from Years 3, 5 and 6, and spoke informally with others.
- The views of 24 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. One parent wrote to inspectors to give a personal view of the school. Questionnaire responses from six members of staff were considered.
- It did not prove possible to meet with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team reviewed a variety of documentation, including the school's monitoring of pupils' progress. The school's self-evaluation, its records of how staff performance is managed and records of the monitoring of teaching were examined. Documentation related to safeguarding and child protection was scrutinised.
- Samples of pupils' books were analysed.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Griffin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a very small primary school in a rural location. Most pupils come from the wider surrounding area, including from several nearby villages. The vast majority of pupils are White British and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is a little below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium, which is extra funding provided for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is very small.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared with the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such a comparison meaningful.
- Just before the last inspection, the school had entered into a federation with a much larger, urban school, some distance away. The two schools share a headteacher, who works in Whitley for one day a week, but have separate governing bodies. The deputy headteacher serves as acting headteacher on days when the headteacher is at the partner school. In September, the two schools plan to become a 'hard' federation with a single governing body.
- There have been considerable changes to staffing since the previous inspection.

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

- Raise achievement to be outstanding, through making more teaching outstanding, particularly by:
  - increasing the precision with which teachers prepare work at different levels of difficulty for pupils of different abilities, especially in mathematics
  - ensuring that pupils of high ability are challenged to do their best throughout lessons
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics
  - ensuring marking tells pupils more clearly how well they have done and consistently gives them advice on how they can improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils now make good progress throughout the school. Attainment is rising as a consequence. Boys and girls make similarly good progress.
- The small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium do as well as their classmates, and reach similar standards.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills that vary between individuals and from year to year, but in general they have knowledge and understanding which are lower than those expected for their age. They settle in well and now make rapid progress; as a result, they go into Year 1 with at least average standards. This was not always the case in the past.
- Pupils made particularly good progress in writing last year, eliminating a significant weakness from the time of the previous inspection. Progress in mathematics and reading was also good, but was not as consistent in mathematics as it was in English. Staff have accurately identified that many pupils struggle to apply their good arithmetic skills to solving mathematical problems, and are starting to give pupils more opportunities to tackle such tasks.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in the light of their difficulties, because they are given tasks that are tightly matched to their needs. Those who have the highest levels of need do particularly well because they are given sensitive, expert support to help them cope well in class and they are challenged to do the best they can.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading in the younger classes. They quickly become fluent readers, and read unfamiliar words well because they have a secure understanding of phonics.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school, and an increasing proportion is outstanding. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least good. This is the key to pupils' much-improved achievement and to the continuing acceleration of their progress.
- A major strength in all classes is the excellent use of discussion, to help pupils to sort out their ideas and to involve them fully in the lessons. This is particularly valuable in supporting the much-higher standards reached in writing since the previous inspection. Pupils are able to rehearse what they write before they put pen to paper, so that their final efforts are better organised and more interesting.
- Teachers have become much more skilled in assessing pupils' attainment so that they can provide individuals with tasks that meet their different needs. This means that pupils usually get work that is challenging but manageable. Occasionally, this process is not precise enough; consequently, a few pupils have tasks that are too hard for them, or sometimes too easy.
- Teachers frequently prepare suitably difficult tasks to challenge the more-able pupils. However, on occasions these pupils have to undertake simpler tasks first, when they are capable of getting straight on with the harder work.
- Pupils' good progress in mathematics is supported by clear explanations from teachers, often enhanced by good use of the electronic whiteboard to clarify new learning. However, pupils have not been given enough practice in the past to use their mathematical skills to solve problems. This issue is being tackled by the school.
- Teachers make very good use of skilled extra adults in the classroom to increase the level of challenge and support that pupils receive. A strength of many lessons is the way the adults frequently monitor pupils' progress when they are working and intervene quickly to address any misconceptions. Teachers also challenge those who are successful to refine their work.
- Pupils' written work is marked frequently and pupils are told which targets have been met. They are praised for success and their mistakes are highlighted. However, teachers do not often tell pupils clearly just how well they have done. In mathematics, there are good examples of pupils

being given extra tasks to practise elements they have found difficult, but this is not consistent. Pupils are not always shown just how to improve in the future.

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

- Pupils' behaviour, already good at the time of the previous inspection, is now excellent. Pupils listen attentively in class, work hard and are keen to succeed. They tackle mistakes in their work conscientiously and greatly enjoy learning. Pupils are polite, friendly and cheerful, and very positive about all aspects of school. This is shown in their above-average attendance.
- At break times, boys and girls of different ages play together happily. Older pupils are notably kind and considerate to younger ones. They play energetically but safely, and ensure their games do not spoil the enjoyment of others.
- In class, pupils show outstanding collaborative skills working with a range of partners. Their partner for the week is chosen by lot, and a Year 6 pupil explained how much fun it was to work with different age groups, saying, 'Sometimes the Year 3 children have better ideas than we do!'
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school and can explain why. The main reason is the high level of trust they have in the adults to look after them. Pupils know how they can contribute to their own and one another's safety, both in school and beyond. They are particularly knowledgeable about keeping safe when using the internet.
- Pupils thrive on the many responsibilities they take on as they get older. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to be 'buddies' to Reception pupils when they arrive, and taking care of them. They are confident that their views are shared through the school council and that staff act on them.
- Pupils and their parents are very positive about behaviour and safety in the school. Pupils have learned a lot about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism. They say that any kind of bullying is very rare in the school, and that any minor misbehaviour tends to be teasing between friends, one saying, '... But we are all friends here.'
- Pupils are outgoing, and enjoy learning about life beyond the local area. They are very enthusiastic about the visits they have made to the other school in the federation, and the activities they have shared with their 'buddies' there. They enjoy their communication with a linked school in France, and talk knowledgeably about the contrast between the two environments. During the inspection, older pupils were organising a cake sale to support another school they are linked with, in a poor area of Kenya. Without doubt, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well.

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

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher has led to a strong focus on improving pupils' achievement through better teaching. Rigorous monitoring of teaching has given teachers clear feedback about their performance. High-quality training, much of it developed in conjunction with colleagues in the federation, has helped teachers improve their practice continually in the last two years.
- Excellent systems have been introduced to check on how well different groups of pupils, as well as individuals, are making progress. These systems are used to help the school ensure that everyone makes similarly good progress, but also to hold teachers to account for their impact on pupils' learning. Together with lesson monitoring, this information is central to managing teachers' performance, so they are suitably rewarded for their effectiveness.
- Expertise shared between the two partner schools has been a major feature of many of the improvements that have been made, including working together to develop the curriculum and assessment.
- The school has established an extremely effective leadership structure that is carefully tailored to the particular needs of a small school. All teaching staff have become important leaders,

supporting one another with their expertise and sharing a common vision for the future.

- The pupil premium funding has been spent effectively to support the progress of eligible pupils. This has ensured there is no significant difference between their attainment and that of their classmates.
- The local authority provided good support to the school, particularly after the previous inspection, and continues to provide extra financial help based on the school's 'satisfactory' grading at that time. Support more recently has been suitably 'light-touch' in view of the many improvements made in the interim.
- Through the many positive changes made, the school has succeeded in 'turning round' the views of parents in the last two years, after disappointing responses in the past. The views expressed on Parent View were overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of respondents saying they would recommend the school to others.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and eliminates discrimination. This is shown both by pupils' excellent relationships with one another, and by the good progress made by different groups.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is very effective both in supporting the staff in making changes and in challenging the school about its performance. Governors have excellent systems to ensure they are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the quality of teaching and data about pupils' achievement, including the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. For example, two governors attend all staff meetings where data are discussed, reporting back to colleagues so that all are fully informed. The governing body has a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed, and ensures that weaknesses are addressed and good performance is rewarded. Governors pay due attention to child protection and safeguarding, and have ensured that procedures meet requirements.

## 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>	110997
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	405313

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	47
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Hood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Powell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 288255
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