

Whitehouse Community Primary School

Marlow Road, Ipswich, IP1 5JN

Inspection dates 2–3 May 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.

- Pupils make good progress in all year groups and achieve well in relation to their low starting points. Attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding as a result of thorough and regular checking of the quality of teaching by the headteacher and subject leaders.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- Parents are very pleased with what the school provides for their children.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher ensures that staff and governors, including support staff and office staff, all work together as a cohesive team.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes excellent. Pupils feel very safe at school.
- The work planned for pupils and the additional activities provided for pupils out of school hours are effective.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They want to improve their work and are keen to do well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking is inconsistent in the extent to which it shows pupils how to improve their work.
- The presentation of pupils' work and the neatness of their handwriting varies.
- Pupils by the end of Year 2 are not yet achieving expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics because work is not always sufficiently demanding.
- The governing body is not yet well equipped to hold the school fully to account for the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, six of which were joint observations carried out with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils moving around the school, in the dining room and at break and lunchtimes. They listened to pupils read in lessons and more formally.
- Meetings were held with pupils, including members of the school council, senior leaders, including subject and phase leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to Parent View (Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents) as well as parents’ spoken views. Inspectors also took account of 48 staff questionnaires and the school’s own most recent parental questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school’s data about the progress of pupils, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and records relating to performance management.

Inspection team

Nichola Perry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Podmore

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil-premium funding (additional money given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is high, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes of staff.
- The school's deputy headteacher has been seconded to support another local authority school for two terms.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - setting work that is sufficiently demanding for all pupils
 - making sure that marking clearly shows pupils how they can improve their work
 - having high expectations in every class of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by providing a tailor-made training package which ensures that all governors rapidly acquire the necessary skills and understanding to help them to challenge the school's performance with greater rigour.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The considerable improvements in teaching and the way in which pupils' learning is now planned throughout the school mean that pupils in almost all year groups make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress.
- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are low for their age. Significant numbers of children have markedly less well-developed language and communication skills than those expected for their age. Children of all abilities make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. This is because they are effectively taught and given interesting things to do so that they rapidly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning.
- Phonics (the sound that letters make) is taught effectively so that pupils make rapid progress in developing their reading skills. Reading across the school shows that pupils increasingly make links between their reading and real-life experiences. Pupils are also developing good expression when they read aloud.
- Attainment by the time pupils leave the school is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are rising quickly, most notably in Years 3, 4 and 5 as progress speeds up.
- In all year groups, the introduction of more structured learning has contributed strongly to sustained improvements. For example, better progress in developing numeracy skills is increasingly enabling pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, including those in real-life situations. Similarly, pupils now write more confidently, effectively using basic skills along with interesting language to produce work of a good standard.
- Learning in almost all classes is now consistently good, and sometimes it is better. The legacy of underachievement has been halted so that teachers are spending less time on helping the oldest pupils to catch up. In Years 1 and 2, where good progress has not yet resulted in raised standards, this is due to a number of recent changes in staffing.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium has been good because funding has been used effectively to provide additional teaching sessions, as well as other support, for these pupils. In 2012, in English they achieved as well as other pupils in the school. In mathematics, they were the equivalent of around two terms behind their classmates. Test results and current school data show that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is favourable compared to similar pupils nationally, and the gap between their attainment and that of other groups in English and mathematics is reducing considerably.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the best teaching, teachers are increasingly making links between learning in one subject and how this is relevant to learning in other subjects. Teachers are also more frequently helping pupils to understand how their learning is useful to them in everyday situations. This makes learning more meaningful to pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of coming to school.
- In all lessons seen, and in pupils' books, teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils of all abilities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. This is helping them to improve at a faster rate than in the past. Pupils who find learning difficult are very well supported by a team

of well-trained adults who, like the teachers, ask searching questions and encourage lots of discussion.

- Information about pupils' progress is used to set work which is more challenging than in the past. Teachers frequently amend their planning to take account of the progress pupils make from lesson to lesson. This results in activities that are planned well for pupils of all abilities. In the most effective lessons, teachers also refocus their teaching when they see that some pupils are finding the work easy.
- Whilst work is demanding in most lessons, this is not consistently the case. In Years 3 to 6, the pace of learning challenges pupils to extend and apply their skills. Teachers support and prompt pupils expertly to help them think hard and solve problems so that they achieve well. This is particularly notable in Year 6, where gaps in some pupils' earlier learning are still evident. In Years 1 and 2, the pace of learning is not yet sufficiently demanding of pupils. Although pupils are making better progress than in the past, it is not yet fast enough to bring about improved levels of attainment.
- Marking has become more effective in helping pupils to improve their work, although in-depth marking is not consistent across the school. There are good examples of pupils being involved in amending, improving and marking their own work and that of each other. This is helping them to take greater responsibility for their own work and progress. Presentation and handwriting in pupils' books, whilst improved, show that expectations are not yet consistent in all classes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Much behaviour seen during the inspection was exemplary. This, and pupils very positive attitudes to learning, contributes strongly to the good progress they make and the purposeful atmosphere which is evident around the school.
- Relationships are excellent and pupils show that they are very accepting of difference. Pupils demonstrate respect and consideration towards each other so that they work very constructively together.
- Teachers manage behaviour very effectively. Any low-level disruption is dealt with effectively so that learning is not interrupted. Most pupils manage their own behaviour well because they understand what is expected.
- Pupils enjoy, and take great pride in, their role as playground buddies, especially to the younger pupils so that they play well together.
- Pupils say that the good behaviour seen during the inspection in lessons, around the school, in the dining room as well as out in the playground, is generally typical. They report that pupils get on well with each other. They consider that the playgrounds are well supervised and that they trust the adults to help and support them should they encounter a problem.
- Pupils understand that their contributions are highly valued by their teachers so that they feel safe to 'have a go' in the full knowledge that they are allowed to make mistakes. Pupils are very proud of their school. They participate confidently in discussions and actively seek to engage in conversation, including with visitors to their school.
- Pupils feel very safe and their parents agree. They talk confidently about the different forms of bullying, including inappropriate use of language towards different groups. They understand

exactly what action to take should it occur. Pupils have very good knowledge about steps they need to take to keep themselves and others safe.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership from the headteacher has been the key factor in the rapid improvement since the previous inspection. All staff, including administrative and support staff, work together effectively as a team, are proud of their school and aspire to excellence.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching has effectively eradicated inadequate practice and has considerably raised the overall quality of teaching so that there are now increasing examples of teaching that is outstanding. The system which sets the targets for all staff to improve their performance is effectively managed so that all adults are now held strongly to account for the quality of their work and the achievement of pupils.
- Planning which guides the school's progress towards improvement highlights key actions to be taken. This means that leaders at all levels have developed an accurate understanding of the successful aspects of their area of responsibility as well as knowing those that require further work. Staff questionnaires, and staff spoken to during the inspection, all value highly the range of additional training and the extent to which it has helped them to improve their work.
- The role of senior leaders in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work is developing well. Effective leadership of English and mathematics, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage have played key parts in making sure that work planned for pupils, the quality of teaching and the monitoring of pupils' progress are constantly improving.
- The school provides strong support for pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. All pupils joining the school, including those coming from other schools or settings, are helped to settle so that they feel safe and quickly blend in with the other pupils. Links with external support agencies are many and used to good effect. Tracking of pupils' academic progress and their personal development is very thorough so that pupils consistently have good opportunities to learn well and thrive alongside their classmates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through the subjects and activities provided. Visits, visitors and links with families and the local and wider communities enrich pupils' learning and help to broaden their horizons. Attractive and informative displays in classrooms and around the school reflect the exciting and varied work pupils do. Pupils find displays interesting and helpful to their learning.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and any discrimination is always tackled swiftly and effectively. The pupil premium funding is used particularly well to support eligible pupils and their families. The wide range of extra adult support and activities mean that these pupils are increasingly progressing as well as their classmates.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support for this previously satisfactory school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very supportive of the school and are keen for it to improve. They make sure that the budget is managed effectively and that funding such as the pupil premium is used prudently to bring about improvement in pupils' achievement. Governors make sure that the school meets all current national requirements for safeguarding pupils. The governing body is

kept well informed about all aspects of the school so that they understand actions taken to manage underperformance or reward good practice. Similarly, detailed reports mean that governors are fully informed about the school's performance, such as the quality of teaching and increasing rates of pupils' progress. Governors recognise how the school needs to improve further and to this end they have some involvement in planning for this. However, several members of the governing body are still relatively new to their roles and are still acquiring necessary skills, such as those which will enable them to provide a higher level of challenge to school leaders.

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	124660
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	406260

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Doy
Headteacher	Jacqui Frost
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2011
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