

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **WHITCHURCH CP SCHOOL**

Whitchurch-on-Thames, Reading

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123009

Headteacher: Mrs P Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Jolly (8750)

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> March – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 189950

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Eastfield Lane Whitchurch-on-Thames Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG8 7EJ
Telephone number:	0118 984 2347
Fax number:	0118 984 2347
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bradon
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mr A C Jolly	Registered inspector
Mr R Jones	Lay inspector
Mrs M Hirst	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
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The ethos of the school is very good.  
Teaching is consistently good and often very good.  
Pupils of all abilities make good progress in the development of literacy.  
Pupils achieve consistently high standards in science  
Behaviour is good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning.  
There is a strong partnership with parents.  
The school has a very effective Governing Body.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**20-23**

Management roles need to be more clearly defined and delegated.  
There is insufficient use of information technology to support the curriculum.  
The accommodation for pupils in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whitchurch County Primary School is a small school with 4 classes. It is situated in the village of Whitchurch, close to the River Thames, a short distance from Reading in Berkshire. Pupils join the school in the term in which they are five and leave when they are 11.

There are currently 89 pupils on roll, of whom a very small number come from homes where English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs, including statements, is broadly in line with the national average. The pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds but very few are from economically disadvantaged homes. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals. Almost all the pupils attend the pre-school group, which operates in the school grounds and attainment on entry is above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Whitchurch Primary School is a good school. Pupils achieve above average standards in English and science by the time they leave the school. The teaching is good and often very good and the leadership is effective. The school provides good value for money

#### **What the school does well**

- The ethos of the school is very good. The staff are fully committed to the well being of the pupils, know them well and care effectively for their development.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- All pupils make good progress in the development of literacy.
- The pupils achieve consistently high standards in science.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- There is a strong partnership with parents. They give very good support to the school and are kept well informed.
- The school has a very effective Governing Body.

#### **What could be improved**

- There is insufficient use of information technology to support the curriculum.
- Management roles need to be more clearly defined and developed.
- The accommodation for pupils in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in October, 1996. It has improved significantly since then, particularly in the quality of teaching, which is now consistently good and often very good. The School Development Plan was criticised in the last report but it has reduced the identified tasks and is now a very effective working document, shaping future plans for the school. Pupils now make consistent progress throughout the school, whereas previously progress was described as uneven. They are given more opportunities to show initiative. The planned curriculum is now clearer and more relevant. However, the role of the subject co-ordinators continues to need further development although the newness and overall inexperience of the teaching staff largely explain this. The accommodation also is still not providing the appropriate environment for whole-class teaching in Key Stage 2.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All Schools			Similar Schools
	1996	1997	1998	1999
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	D	A	B	D
Science	B	A	A*	A*

Key	
<i>Well above average</i>	A
<i>Above average</i>	B
<i>Above average</i>	C
<i>Below average</i>	D
<i>Well below average</i>	E

These results must be viewed with caution as year groups are small and often include less than 10 pupils. Thus only seven pupils were registered for the 1999 tests making those results invalid for isolated comparison and analysis. However, there have been clear trends over the last four years.

Standards have been consistently well above average in English. Pupils achieve good standards and the school's results are well above average when compared with similar schools.

In science standards have been consistently above average and usually well above average. Last year, in the small cohort, results were exceptional; placing the school in the top five per cent nationally and when compared with similar schools.

Although results in mathematics have generally been above average, standards are more variable and less impressive. Thus in 1996 and 1999 Key Stage 2 results were not as good as in English and science. Over the last four years, boys have performed significantly less well than girls in the mathematics tests at the end of Key Stage 2. This is all the more striking because boys have performed better than girls in the mathematics tests over the same period at the end of Key Stage 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about the work they do and are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school both in lessons and other activities.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and there are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is average and the level of unauthorised absence is below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Not seen	Good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall the teaching is good and often it is very good. All the teaching seen was at least sound; half of the total was good and a further two-fifths was very good.

Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 it is predominantly very good. Teachers' questioning is particularly good, offering considerable challenge to pupils while reinforcing existing knowledge. The lessons have very clearly focussed objectives built upon thorough, long-term planning. Relationships are good and all classes are very well managed. The work is very well matched to the prior attainment of pupils in almost all lessons.

Occasionally, the introductions to lessons are a little too long and it is only then that the pace, which is an effective feature of most lessons, flags.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are consistently well taught. The teaching is effectively targeted at the needs of all pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant. It is well planned to meet the needs of and ability of all pupils. However, marking does not sufficiently set targets for future improvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is sound, enabling all pupils to make appropriate progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound overall. The arrangements for the promotion of pupils' moral and social development are particularly effective and are reflected in the behaviour of the pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe and secure environment for the children

The school not only achieves good standards in English, mathematics and science but, offers an appropriately broad primary education. All statutory requirements are met. Parents have considerable confidence in the school helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school has a caring ethos.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, who was absent during the inspection, is very well respected by all members of the school community. Some management roles are insufficiently defined.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are extremely committed, hard working and effective. They fulfil their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has set clear targets for the future and systematically evaluates its own performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective use of its resources and in its long-term planning carefully links decisions on educational priorities to the anticipated budget.

The governors are far-sighted and evaluate the school's performance effectively. However, the roles of curriculum co-ordinators are insufficiently defined. The need to have delegated powers was emphasised by the headteacher's absence during the inspection. The school applies effectively the principle of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the leadership of the school.</li> <li>• They would be very comfortable alerting the school to a concern.</li> <li>• The closeness of the links of the school to the home.</li> <li>• The high expectations of pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities provided outside school.</li> <li>• The right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with the very positive judgements about the school. They also judged that the range of activities provided outside lessons is satisfactory for this size of school. Parents' views varied about what was the correct amount of homework. Most who were dissatisfied considered there was too much homework but, acknowledged it was in line with the government's recommendations. Inspectors noted that the homework guidelines issued to parents had made arrangements clearer and considered the provision and structure to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**The ethos of the school is very good. A committed staff know the pupils and care effectively for their development.**

1. The pupils can tell they are valued as individuals in the school. Their contributions are welcomed in lessons their and perceptive responses earn well-judged praise and encouragement. The pupils in return show an enthusiasm for the school and a commitment to its values. Their attitudes to work are consistently very good.
2. Morale is very good. All the staff are hard working, exuding positive values. They are cheerful and stimulating but never to the point of losing the sense of purpose in the lesson or the controlled atmosphere necessary for learning. Great care is taken to promote the pupils' development. They are encouraged to question and challenge and do so courteously. Politeness is a striking feature of the school and relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils work well together in groups and listen attentively to the opinions of others. They are given plenty of opportunities to take responsibility such as helping in assembly. The school is a warm, caring and stimulating place in which pupils can learn and develop.

**Teaching is consistently good and often very good.**

3. The teachers are enthusiastic about the work they do and this transmits itself to the pupils. Lessons are characterised by penetrating questions that produce perceptive responses. This is particularly noticeable in Years 5 and 6 where pupils give mature, intelligent answers to interesting questions about the humanities. In English lessons, questioning also goes beyond the straightforward so that pupils studying a text develop the ability to infer meaning.
4. Teaching is generally characterised by pace and high expectations. In a lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 who finished a task early were given further challenges. Teachers are not content with pupils responding satisfactorily but extend pupils of all abilities to the limits of their capabilities. This consistently good teaching has a direct effect on the above average standards.

**Pupils of all abilities make good progress in the development of literacy**

5. The average points score in the Key Stage 1 reading and writing tests has been well above average for the last three years. These scores for 1999 are also above average when compared with similar schools.
6. The Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment test results are even better. The average points score in English has been well above the national average for the last three years and was also well above the national average in 1999 when compared with similar schools.
7. These test results confirm what is clear in lessons. Pupils are confident speakers and attentive listeners. In a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class, pupils in groups recited verses from 'The Highwayman' with sensitivity and a clear understanding of rhyme and rhythm. The school has given considerable emphasis to writing this year and all classes have 'A Writers' Workshop' focus. This is clearly bearing dividends as many pupils write imaginatively and with an effective command of grammar and punctuation.

### **Pupils achieve consistently high standards in science.**

8. The high quality of work in science is a strength of the school. In last year's national tests, for the admittedly small cohorts in the school, standards were above average in Key Stage 1 and very high in Key Stage 2, both compared nationally and with similar schools. The Key Stage 2 results placed the school in the top five per cent of schools.
9. Science lessons are challenging and stimulating. Year 2 pupils, for example, who finished the tasks early, were given further challenges. In the mixed age Year 3 and Year 4 class the class teacher used very good strategies to involve all pupils in an investigation. Pupils then observed that heat enables atoms to move which explains why flames flicker on a candle.
10. The pupils have a very good knowledge of scientific processes. Year 4 pupils confidently provide good explanations of concepts such as melting, evaporation and condensation. Pupils show good development in their use of scientific language throughout the school and use words such as transparent, conduct and convect appropriately in their writing. From a young age, pupils record evidence and the full processes of investigation effectively, using illustrations, graphs and text. All pupils can predict accurately what might happen when they take part in scientific investigations.

### **Behaviour is good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning**

11. The behaviour of pupils was never less than satisfactory in all the lessons seen. It was usually good and often very good. Pupils are attentive when the teacher is talking and listen intently to the key points of a lesson. They can sustain concentration for extended periods of time when working individually on a task. In groups they collaborate well and work purposefully.
12. Relationships are good at breaktime and pupils play well together. Behaviour and manners are good when pupils eat lunch in the hall. Pupils have good relationships with adult supervisors. The pupils are courteous and polite to visitors and make a good contribution to the welcoming atmosphere of the school.

### **There is a strong partnership with parents. They give very good support to the school and are kept well informed.**

13. There is a happy buzz about the school before lessons begin each morning. Parents are welcomed into the school to help their children at the start of the day, particularly in reception.
14. Relationships between the parents and teachers are open and friendly. 98 per cent of the parents who completed the questionnaires believed the school worked closely with parents and all the respondents felt they would be comfortable raising any problem or asking any question of the staff. New parents are invited to a 'tea party' and newcomers are introduced to other parents. Indicative of the attitude of the staff is the fact that the school sports day is held on a Saturday to enable more parents and relatives to attend.
15. Parents respond positively to this approach. They reported that they "are welcomed with open arms" if they offer to help at school. A help list for tasks in school elicits positive responses from parents.
16. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. Reports are clear and detailed and regular parents' evenings are held to enable teachers and parents to

discuss their children's progress. There are regular newsletters including class newsletters on curriculum issues. An interesting feature is a parents' notice board which includes regular minutes of governors' meetings. These all contribute to a real sense of partnership between the school and home which benefits the pupils.

### **The school has a very effective Governing Body**

17. The Governing Body is forward thinking, hardworking and analytical: acting as a very effective 'critical friend' to the school. The governors, the majority of whom have children in the school, are well informed and take a strong interest in the pupils' progress. They are very aware of the need to monitor and evaluate the school's performance, which they do effectively. One governor, who has a particular strength in observational skills, is helping to train members of the Governing Body to monitor teaching and learning. They make careful analysis of pupils' attainment in order to set future targets for the school.
18. Educational priorities are clearly identified in the School Development Plan, which is a very effective document. These priorities are at the heart of financial decisions that meet both the short-term and long-term needs of the school.
19. The budget is carefully monitored. The governors ensure the minutes of their committee meetings are well circulated. A particularly helpful document 'Who does what at Whitchurch Primary School' has been produced by governors for parents. This outlines the roles of various governors and staff at the school.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **Management roles need to be more clearly defined and delegated**

20. The teaching staff are all relatively new to the school and largely inexperienced. It is therefore asking a lot of them to be effective subject co-ordinators. However, their roles would be easier to fulfil if they were more clearly defined. Most of the defined tasks are generic and there are very few references to specific subject skills. For instance, no reference is made to the implementation of the National Numeracy or National Literacy Strategy. The key elements of monitoring pupils' learning and classroom teaching are not included in the job descriptions for subject co-ordinators.
21. Unfortunately the headteacher was absent from the school during the period of the inspection. This highlighted the fact that there were no delegated powers for the member of staff who was to lead the school in her absence.

#### **There is insufficient use of information technology to support the curriculum**

22. There was little evidence of information technology being used to support the curriculum either from pupils' previous work or in lessons during the inspection. Many pupils had computers at home where they had received training from parents. The pupils had limited knowledge of understanding of modelling and control. The school has received recent funding from the National Grid for Learning and recognises this is an area for development.

#### **The accommodation for pupils in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory**

23. Whitchurch Primary School is an attractive school with some imaginative features. However, the current accommodation for pupils in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. The recess areas are used effectively for introductions to lessons, but when pupils are required to write in the main area, the conditions are far too cramped. In a geography

lesson for Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils were too close together to be able to use atlases properly without impeding others. Insufficient tables can fit into the classrooms and pupils are too crowded to be able to both write and use a reference or textbook. The main teaching area is currently only providing one square metre of room for each pupil in Key Stage 2.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The school should now:

### **\*Improve the use of information technology to support the curriculum by:**

- planning a programme for the systematic development of pupils' skills in all strands of the subject;
- purchasing sufficient hardware to be able to deliver the full curriculum;
- ensuring all staff are fully trained and confident to use information technology to teach all aspects of the curriculum.

### **\*Define and develop management roles more clearly to:**

- improve the effectiveness of co-ordinators in influencing standards within their subjects as identified in the School Development Plan;
- ensure there is a systematic programme of classroom observation supported by appropriate action;
- identify delegated roles and responsibilities.

### **\*Take action to increase the teaching area for whole class lessons in Key Stage 2.**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	38	50	12	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		89
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	3	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89(86)	89(93)	100(86)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	8	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89(93)	100(86)	100(86)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	2	5	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	2
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	6	5	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(100)	71(82)	100(91)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	2
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	6	6	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(86)	86(86)	100(86)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1.2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2.4
White	96.4
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5 : 1
Average class size	22.25 : 1

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	134,181.0
Total expenditure	138,291.0
Expenditure per pupil	1,820
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,668.00
Balance carried forward to next year	23,558.00



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	89
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	46	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	48	13	2	0
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	37	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	23	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	46	19	0	0