



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
White Laith Primary School

Leeds Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 21 and 22 October 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	White Laith Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mr P Riozzi
Address of school:	Naburn Drive Whinmoor Leeds LS14 2BL
Telephone:	0113 2930280
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr S Green
Local education authority area:	Leeds
Unique reference number:	107932
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs A M Talboys HMI
Dates of inspection:	21 and 22 October 2004

Introduction

1. White Laith Primary School is situated in Whinmoor on the northern outskirts of the City of Leeds. The school has 240 pupils on roll, which is similar to the national average. Sixteen per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is broadly in line with the national figure. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is one per cent and this is low. Eleven per cent of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Two per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and this figure is broadly in line with the national average.

2. The school was inspected in June 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of June 2003. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on two occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In October 2004, one HMI and one Additional Inspector inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2003.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the school has made rapid improvements in many of the key areas of its work over the past 16 months and has demonstrated a clear capacity to sustain and continue its improvement;
 - standards have risen steadily over the last sixteen months and this is reflected in some areas of the school's national test results. Significant improvements in writing at Key Stage 1 and English at Key Stage 2 are a feature of the unvalidated 2004 test results. Mathematics in both key stages and science in Key Stage 2 remain areas for future development;
 - the pupils enter the school with below average language, mathematical and social skills and the good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that they make significant progress;
 - the pupils' progress was good in 11 lessons, satisfactory in 15 and unsatisfactory in one. These figures reflect the quality of teaching. Where learning was most effective the pupils were engrossed in their work, showed enthusiasm and were confident to work independently;
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- the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were generally good; the pupils responded well to the school's policy for behaviour. An appropriate range of rewards and sanctions was used to good effect in most lessons. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes was social and the pupils were open and friendly to visitors;
 - levels of attendance have improved greatly over the past year. There is a range of suitable strategies to promote attendance and the good figures last year have already been exceeded in the first half term of this year;
 - provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory;
 - the quality of teaching has improved significantly since June 2003. Effective staffing changes have strengthened the team work within the school as well as improving the overall quality of teaching. Nonetheless, there remains some teaching which is barely satisfactory and fails to capture the interest of all the pupils. The very good and excellent teaching in the school is a valuable resource but has not yet been harnessed to bring about continued improvement;
 - the school has developed policies for the tracking of pupils' performance through the use of targets. These are shared with the pupils and are usefully recorded on prompt cards in the pupils' books, acting as a constant reminder. Particularly good practice was seen, in this respect, in literacy but more work needs to be done in numeracy;
 - the headteacher provides strong and effective leadership, and has a clear vision for the school's future development. He delegates well and, by encouraging staff to take responsibility for major areas of the school, he has established a vibrant group of middle managers. The deputy headteacher has taken a leading role in many of the school's successful strategies for improvement. A long-term plan for the school is being drafted to maintain the forward momentum;
 - the staff work together to help raise attainment and some planning is undertaken collaboratively. However, there are examples of pupils in the same year group but in different classes receiving different standards of provision;
 - the curriculum does not fully meet National Curriculum requirements. Whole-school planning has not secured an appropriate balance of the curriculum in all classes. The school has placed suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and the teaching of religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) has flourished under the enthusiastic leadership of two relatively inexperienced teachers. Work to improve the science curriculum is planned; this is a sensible development which is overdue;
 - staff morale is generally high and most welcome innovation;
 - the chair of governors continues to work hard for the school. He is systematic in his evaluation of the school's progress and he challenges the headteacher appropriately;
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- the partnership with parents has improved over the past year and is now a strong and positive feature of the school.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards, particularly in mathematics across the school and in science at Key Stage 2;
- continue to improve the teaching and learning in the school;
- refine and improve the monitoring and evaluation programmes to ensure consistency of provision;
- improve the curriculum provision to ensure that it meets statutory requirements;
- develop a school improvement plan which continues to focus on current priorities and incorporates actions which will take the school through the next phase of its development.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The school's unvalidated national test results for Key Stage 1 in 2004 indicate that 84 per cent of pupils gained the expected Level 2 and above in writing, and 77 per cent in reading. These results are broadly in line with national figures. Thirty six per cent of the pupils gained Level 3 in reading, which is above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics fell for the second consecutive year to 81 per cent and this is below the national figure.

8. In the 2004 national tests at Key Stage 2 the English results showed improvement, and, with 81 per cent reaching Level 4 and 34 per cent reaching the higher Level 5, these results are above the national figure. In mathematics and science the results showed a decline and were below average; these results were a reversal in the upwards trend for these subjects over the past two years.

9. The pupils enter the school with below average language, mathematical and social skills. The good provision in the Foundation Stage encompasses all the appropriate areas of learning and the pupils make significant progress. They are assessed on entry and suitable records are kept throughout their time in the Foundation Stage. These records facilitate good progression to Year 1.

10. Standards of reading and writing have improved across the school. The library is a valuable resource and each class is taught library skills. The concentration on the technical vocabulary of language in Key Stage 1 provides a good foundation for later study. In Key

Stage 2 there were good examples of high quality writing in history and science. Strategies for promoting the pupils' interest in reading such as the 'reading trail' have worked well. A programme for guided reading is also leading to improvements in comprehension as well as accuracy and fluency of reading. Reading in both key stages is at the expected level. In the harvest assembly, individual pupils read poems aloud with appropriate expression which held the audience's interest.

11. The school's focus on the better use of talk in learning has had a significant impact. The pupils were capable of talking about what they were doing and could explain how to set about tasks.

12. In mathematics the school has taken the bold step of grouping the pupils within Key Stage 2 according to their ability levels. Within these groups the work is planned well to support the range of pupils' needs and pupils make satisfactory progress. Older pupils in groups of predominantly younger pupils showed confidence in their work and were making good progress.

13. The school has worked hard on mental exercises as starter activities in lessons with some success. An effective activity using a number line and quick-fire mental problems was observed in one of the mixed age mathematics sets in Key Stage 2. Work in the pupils' books indicates appropriate standards of work in most classes. In Year 2 the pupils had learned addition and subtraction using number lines, had measured length using correct units and had described properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. In Year 6 the effective use of estimation had increased the pupils' awareness of number. Suitable work on decimals, fractions, percentages and probabilities was presented clearly and was mostly accurate.

14. There were examples of pupils in the same year group but in different classes receiving different standards of provision. For example, the Year 2 pupils in the mixed-age class did not use ICT effectively in their work, whereas the pupils in the single-age class were confident in their use of the keyboards. In science work the Year 2 pupils in the mixed-age class named major body parts and wrote about the senses, whereas in the wholly Year 2 class the pupils were engaged in scientific investigation using prediction and sequencing their recording of the experiments through the skilful use of writing frames.

The quality of education

15. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since June 2003. Effective staffing changes have strengthened the teamwork within the school as well as improving the overall quality of teaching. The quality of teaching was excellent in one lesson, good or very good in ten lessons, satisfactory in four, and unsatisfactory in one. Where the teaching was excellent a guided reading lesson was planned to match the needs of the pupils well and five activities focusing on different aspects of poems produced some very good learning. One group had practised reading poetry and performed to the class with fluency and enthusiasm. Other groups were analysing poems to reinforce learning on structure and the use of language. The very good and excellent teaching in the school is a valuable internal resource which as yet has not been harnessed to bring about continued improvement.

16. There remains some teaching which is barely satisfactory and fails to capture the interest of all the pupils. In the unsatisfactory lesson the teacher failed to fully engage all the pupils and did not explain effectively what the pupils should be doing.

17. The pupils' progress was good in 11 lessons, it was satisfactory in 15 and unsatisfactory in one. These figures reflect the quality of teaching. Where learning was most effective the pupils were engrossed in their work, showed real enthusiasm and were confident to work independently and in paired and group work. They produced some good written and oral work. Where the learning was satisfactory there were strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes the pupils gave only short oral answers and on occasion the pupils were passive for too long. Where the learning was unsatisfactory, the pupils who were not directly working with the teacher made too little progress because they did not understand what was expected of them and they were not confident enough to work independently.

18. The school has developed policies for the tracking of pupils' performance through the use of targets. These are shared with the pupils and are recorded on prompt cards in the pupils' books, acting as a constant reminder. Particularly good practice was seen in literacy, in this respect, but more work needs to be done in numeracy. Targets are shared with parents, who welcome this involvement. Most of the pupils are familiar with their writing targets, and individual reviews and good displays in classrooms are promoting greater understanding.

19. In the Foundation Stage there is good range of themed, practical areas. The pupils settled confidently into well-established routines and groups. The tracking of pupils and their activities and progress is thorough and makes appropriate reference to the Early Learning Goals. Effective teamwork is promoted through good leadership of this stage. There is a strong concentration on developing reading, writing and speaking, and the pupils are taught to work with independence.

20. The curriculum does not fully meet National Curriculum requirements. Whole-school planning has not secured appropriate balance of the curriculum in all classes. The school has placed suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and the teaching of religious education and ICT has flourished under the enthusiastic leadership of two relatively inexperienced teachers. Work to improve the science curriculum is planned; this is a sensible development which is overdue.

21. Worthwhile training and joint planning have ensured consistency in the implementation of the literacy programme and the school's plan to focus on spelling over the next term is timely. The school lacks a firm and cohesive policy for the implementation of mathematics across the school; the plans to introduce a rigorous system similar to that of literacy is an overdue development.

22. With the appointment of a parent partnership leader the school has taken effective steps to include parents more directly in the work of the school. Parents have been invited to discussion groups and they report that issues raised by them have resulted in appropriate action by the school. Attendance at parents evenings is good. It is common practice for the headteacher and deputy headteacher to meet and greet parents in the morning and this has developed into an integral part of the school day. Parents report that they feel welcomed into the school and are pleased to be more involved in their child's learning.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were generally good; the pupils responded well to the school's policy for behaviour. An appropriate range of rewards and sanctions was used to good effect in most lessons. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes was social and the pupils were open and friendly to visitors.

24. The pupils' attendance has improved substantially over the past year. There is a range of suitable strategies to promote good attendance. The school achieved 94.4 per cent attendance last year, and this year to date the figure is 95 per cent, which is above the national average.

25. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and customs in religious education lessons but there remains little celebration of cultural diversity in other areas of the curriculum. The school promotes interest and a sense of wonder through a number of very good displays; for example, the pupils' self-esteem was raised by a good display in the hall which focused on the successes of specific pupils. Residential experiences and educational visits enhance the provision and extracurricular activities include ICT and sports.

Leadership and management

26. The headteacher provides clear-sighted and effective leadership to the school. He delegates well and, by encouraging staff to take responsibility for major areas of the school, he has established a vibrant group of middle managers. He is ably supported by a deputy headteacher who has taken a leading role in many of the school's successful strategies for improvement. The staff work together to raise attainment and much planning is undertaken collaboratively.

27. Subject leadership is being developed effectively and systematically. The headteacher has provided valuable support to subject leaders by undertaking joint lesson observations and modelling good practice in feedback to the teachers. He closely monitors their work but encourages them to take full responsibility for all aspects of the subject across the school. The subject leaders collate portfolios of assessed work. These provide a useful basis for the standardisation of levels for subjects for all staff.

28. Within the Foundation Stage effective organisation and management facilitates a good balance between sharing accommodation across the phase and maintaining the carefully monitored progress of the individual pupils.

29. The school's medium-term action plan is well thought out and continues to promote the school's improvement in the areas previously identified. These are enhanced by new and exciting projects. A longer-term plan is being drafted; this outlines the next stages in the school's development and aims to maintain the upward trend in standards of teaching, learning and attainment.

30. The chair of governors continues to work hard for the school. He analyses performance data systematically and challenges the headteacher on standards. He shares the leadership team's vision of excellence and is actively involved in the school's development planning.

31. Staff morale is generally high and most of the teachers are keen to explore new and exciting programmes of work which will further engage and motivate the pupils and lead to improved attainment.

Implementation of the action plan

32. The inspection report of June 2003 required the school to address five key issues. These principally related to: raising standards; improving leadership and management; improving teaching and learning; improving the partnership with parents; and improving attendance and punctuality. There has been good progress in improving the quality of teaching, leadership, attendance and the involvement of parents, and satisfactory progress in other respects.

33. The school is well led; the headteacher has established a sound culture of accountability and responsibility within the school.

34. The school has firmly placed the raising of standards at the heart of the school improvement planning and future plans are addressing this priority.

35. The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve and, by sustaining the comprehensive programme of observation and monitoring, the school is in a good position to achieve its target of a high proportion of good or very good teaching.

36. The target-setting process for literacy is well established and there are sensible plans to use a similar system for numeracy.

37. The school has introduced a well-considered range of strategies for communicating with parents and involving them more actively in the work of the pupils and this has been welcomed by the parents.

38. The attendance policy is sound and clearly expresses the school's expectations and its procedures. Its consistent implementation has led to significant and sustained improvement in attendance levels.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in June 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January and May 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of June 2003.

In October 2004, an HMI and an Additional Inspector returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Sixteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, representatives from the local education authority and the chair of governors; informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.