



# St White's Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115520  
**LEA** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 279615  
**Inspection dates** 25 April 2006 to 26 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Janet Simms AI

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Primary            | <b>School address</b>     | St White's Road          |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community          |                           | Cinderford               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 4 to 11            |                           | Gloucestershire GL14 3DH |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01594 822311             |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 294                | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01594 822578             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mrs Sylvia Doggett       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 11 October 1999    | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mr Paul Woodward         |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>4 to 11 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>25 April 2006 -<br>26 April 2006 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>279615 |
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St White's is a community primary school situated on two sites, either side of an increasingly busy road in Cinderford, Gloucestershire. With nearly 300 pupils, it is larger than average. Almost all pupils are White British, with English as their first language. There is an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Numbers claiming free school meals are below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  |
| Grade 2 | Good         |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   |

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school evaluated its standard of education as good but, while some elements of its work are good, pupils' academic achievements are not high enough for this to be true overall.

Children in Reception make a secure start and settle quickly. Progress is satisfactory and by the time they enter Year 1, children's standards match expectations, with personal and social skills well developed.

Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but slower in Years 3 to 6. In past years this resulted in below average standards in Year 6. Recent improvements in organisation and practice have increased the rate of older pupils' progress, so they are catching up, although some weaknesses remain. Writing skills are below average on entry and remain weaker than most aspects of work through all year groups. The school recognises this and now has effective strategies in place to improve writing.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and at play are good, and sometimes exemplary. They readily engage in pleasant conversation and are interested in what others have to say. Pupils understand how to live healthily and enjoy opportunities for exercise and fitness.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but rather stronger for younger pupils, as more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not stretched as much as they could be. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good focus on developing creativity, but arrangements for mathematics in Years 3 to 6 restrict some pupils' progress. Care, guidance and welfare are satisfactory, but assessment and target setting have weaknesses which have hindered achievement. External agencies are satisfactorily involved in helping pupils to achieve their potential.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with particular strengths in developing a safe and supportive atmosphere in the school. Improvement since the last report has been satisfactory. Older pupils' achievement declined for a period but effective measures are being taken to turn things round, indicating that the school has adequate capacity to make further improvements. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in Years 3 to 6 by strengthening teaching to provide more challenging work for able pupils and more opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' written work and opportunities for more able pupils to write extended pieces of English.
- Improve individual tracking and target setting to ensure that all pupils, particularly older ones, achieve more.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When children enter the school, standards are broadly average, although writing is weaker. They make satisfactory progress through Reception and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. Satisfactory progress continues to Year 2, where standards in national tests have been average for several years.

Standards were below average in recent Year 6 tests. The school did not meet its 2005 targets, which were suitably challenging. As a result of recently implemented measures to improve this, progress is now satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and standards in the current Year 6 are closer to the average. However, more able pupils still perform less well than they could because improved systems for identifying and planning to challenge them have only just been put in place. Across Years 3 to 6, pupils show weaknesses in problem-solving skills in mathematics.

Writing skills are a weaker part of pupils' work throughout the school. They do not present written work carefully enough and more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not write enough extended work, although opportunities to do so have recently improved. However, the school's emphasis on developing pupils' creative experience leads to good achievement in areas such as art. Throughout the school, achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory in all aspects of work.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are good. Relationships are good. Pupils are confident, display good attitudes and enjoy their work. They respect each other, working successfully in groups and pairs. This generates very positive atmospheres in lessons and at play. Pupils value teachers' rewards for good behaviour, effort and achievement, which raise self-esteem. They talk enthusiastically about what they enjoy, and feel safe and secure in school. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils know what to do when occasional bad behaviour occurs because school systems are effective. They understand school rules and what may happen if they break them. Pupils are satisfactorily involved in charity and fundraising activities. Competitions are held to raise money to help educate an African pupil, for example. The school council has successfully contributed several ideas to improve the pupils' environment. These include better playground games and the peer mediation system which helps resolve disagreements during playtimes. Pupils respond well to "healthy living" opportunities such as the CHAMPS scheme, which rewards those involved in physical exercise, and they run a "healthy" tuck shop.

Pupils are properly prepared for future education and work now that achievement in English and mathematics is better in Years 3 to 6.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but stronger in Reception and Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan carefully and share learning objectives with classes. They check pupils' understanding well, managing behaviour skilfully. Across all ages and subjects, pupils apply themselves well to learning. They collaborate purposefully in groups and enjoy acquiring new skills and knowledge. Older pupils begin to develop independent learning skills.

The school has concentrated on improving the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 after the recent run of disappointing test results. This is bearing fruit and pupils are now learning at a faster rate. There are still weaknesses in the pace and rigour of some work, particularly in the level of challenge for more able pupils. In some lessons the use of resources to engage pupils is also unimaginative.

The school's assessment systems are improving, but teachers do not always use knowledge of prior attainment to ensure that teaching fully challenges all pupils. Many pupils do not know what their targets are or what they mean. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are properly identified and they learn well. Marking is satisfactory and most pupils learn from teachers' supportive comments. Information and communication technology is beginning to improve learning; for instance, in Years 5 and 6, laptops have enabled pupils to observe Egyptian artefacts closely. Few classrooms have interactive whiteboards but the school is trying to improve this.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced throughout the school. It is suitable for the needs of children in the Reception Year. This secure start ensures that they are satisfactorily prepared for Year 1 because they have good personal and social skills and work together well.

Good artwork features strongly in creative indoor and outdoor displays. The mathematics curriculum has some weaknesses. It does not provide consistent opportunity for pupils to develop problem-solving skills, so most find it difficult to apply mathematical knowledge and understanding. Recent additional funding has been well used to enable large classes of older pupils to be split, so pupils are now making better progress. The school provides satisfactorily for pupils with learning difficulties through well-targeted individual support programmes.

Older pupils enjoy a good range of after-school clubs, including many sporting opportunities, but there are limited activities for younger pupils. Well-organised lunchtime sessions promote healthy lifestyles through energetic, structured play. Pupils greatly enjoy visits, for example, to the local 'wilderness centre', which develops observational art skills well.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Staff are very sensitive to the challenges of working on a split site, such as crossing a busy road, and manage them well. Pupils work in a supportive, caring environment and child protection procedures are secure. Systems to monitor and track pupils' progress have not been established long enough to be fully effective. Older pupils are insufficiently involved in setting their targets and many do not understand them. The school supports pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well, so they enjoy work and achieve well. "Booster" lessons help raise achievement for targeted groups. However, identification of and provision for gifted and talented pupils have barely started. The school recognises that the use of assessment information is in its early stages and has rightly prioritised this. Improvements in assessment are already helping to raise achievement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors play their proper role in challenging leaders. An example of this is their concern about recent test results in Year 6, which they helped to analyse. Parents value the school's provision and feel their children are happy and secure. Pupils strongly endorse this.

Self-evaluation is improving, but currently lacks sufficient focus on achievement. This has led to managers believing that the school is more effective than it is. The school has recently recognised weaknesses and implemented improvements to address them.

Leaders actively seek ways to engage parents more effectively in their children's education, but are disappointed that efforts have had a lack of response. Such involvement declines as pupils get older.

Resources, including staff, are sufficient and properly managed to provide a suitable curriculum. Outside agencies are properly involved in supporting achievement. Recent improvements are particularly benefiting older, more able pupils, who are now closer to achieving their potential. Leaders have been successful in creating a safe, caring environment in which pupils enjoy learning. Since the last inspection, some aspects of provision have improved. Accurate identification of several areas still requiring improvement, such as assessment and tracking, demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 3   | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 3   | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage  | 3   | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | NA |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 3 | NA |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 3 | NA |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | NA |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 | NA |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 | NA |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 3 | NA |

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 3   | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | NA |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | NA  |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | NA  |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome in your school on 25 and 26 April. The other inspectors and I were very pleased to hear your feelings about the school and were glad you talked to us in such a friendly and polite way. I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school. Here are the main points:

Good things: • You feel happy and safe in the school and your parents are pleased with what you do there. • You enjoy learning and work well together in lessons. You play nicely together and your behaviour is very good when you work and play. • Your teachers take good care of you and make sure you keep safe, including the times when you cross the busy road. • Older pupils are starting to make better progress. • You like after-school activities and enjoy opportunities to keep fit and healthy. Things which could be better: • We feel that older pupils have not been progressing well enough, but that you have started to do so recently. You need to understand better how “problem solving” is used in all areas of mathematics. • Your written work could be better presented and some of you need to write longer, more complicated pieces of English. • Not all of you fully understand your targets and what they mean. Teachers are going to find ways to make these clearer to you and to find better ways of tracking how well you are doing in your learning. We know you will try to help with this, so you can explain your targets clearly to other people, including your parents.

Thank you again.

Yours sincerely

Janet Simms, Lead inspector