



# Whitfield and Aspen School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118459  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280320  
**Inspection dates** 11 October 2005 to 12 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Faysal Mikdadi RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Mayfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Whitfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Dover, Kent CT16 3LJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 821526
<b>Number on roll</b>	383	<b>Fax number</b>	01304 827300
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Glynn Stephens
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Lamb

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 11 October 2005 - 12 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280320
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Whitfield and Aspen is a large primary school near Dover. Pupils are overall from White British backgrounds. There is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The school has had a turbulent time, which ended with the recent appointment of a headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has also now incorporated a special needs unit as part of the main school.

On entry to reception, the children's skills are below those usually found. They are particularly weak in communication skills.

## **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 quality of education and gives good value for money.

Pupils make good progress to achieve average standards. This is because of the good quality teaching. Following a dip in the end-of-Year 6 test results in 2004, they have improved significantly in 2005. This improvement is currently being maintained. Pupils make particularly good progress in their literacy skills.

Pupils are happy in the school and they speak enthusiastically about what it offers. Pupils behave well in and outside their classrooms. They are courteous and co-operative. The school has been particularly successful in ensuring that every single child is included in all aspects of its life. This has resulted in a warm and safe learning environment.

There is not enough checking up on teaching and learning by teachers with responsibility. This hinders senior managers in their efforts to bring about further improvements. The school does not yet tell pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work further. However, positive changes recently made to ensure that every child in the school matters equally and with the clear understanding of the school's priorities, especially by the headteacher, the school is now in a position to make good improvements.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- ensure that key managers monitor teaching and learning more systematically and use the results of such monitoring to bring about further improvements
- ensure that assessment strategies include always telling the pupils what they need to do to improve their work further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 do well. They make good progress, particularly in their communication and social skills. Standards attained by the end of Year 2 have improved significantly in the last two years. Pupils now reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in speaking, listening and reading quickly improve and standards in writing also benefit from the good teaching. Similarly, standards at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily. Standards in English, mathematics and science are now in line with the national average. Given that the children come into school with below-average prior attainment, these improvements show good achievement over their time in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress.

Grade: 2

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are polite, showing appropriate respect for themselves and each other. They enjoy their work and life in school. These positive attitudes and the effective teaching mean that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for their spiritual development in assemblies. Pupils' attendance is in line with that in most primary schools and punctuality is good. They enjoy coming to school, want to succeed and take pride in their work and school.

Teachers and teaching assistants provide exceptionally good role models and support pupils very well. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility and make a contribution to the life of the school, particularly through their involvement in the School Council, which is made up of representatives from every class.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because the school includes them fully in all aspects of its life and plans very effectively to meet their individual needs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In personal, social and health education, science and physical education lessons, the pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. The playgrounds are healthy environments where pupils can play or relax unhindered.

Grade: 2

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and pupils clearly enjoy them. They respond well and are keen to get things right. Use of well-focused assessment and clear targets for learning help pupils to understand how well they are doing. Pupils co-operate well with each other and have good quality relationships with their teachers. This gives pupils the confidence to ask and answer questions. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and they skilfully use questions to check that pupils have understood new ideas. However, the pace in some lesson is slow, which can cause some pupils to be reluctant to start their tasks. Teachers' marking does not always give a clear indication to pupils as to how they can improve. Work given to pupils is not sufficiently varied. This results in the more able pupils not being sufficiently challenged at times.

Teaching assistants play an important and effective part in ensuring very good support for all pupils, especially those with specific learning needs.

Grade: 2

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the recent initiatives in the curriculum in the Reception classes have been successful. This has resulted in a lively, interesting curriculum with a strong emphasis on language development, which matches the needs of these young children.

In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum fulfils the requirements. The school is developing an innovative and inclusive curriculum that will cater for the needs of all the children, including those with severe learning difficulties. Some recent initiatives to promote greater creativity are already proving effective in some classes and will provide the model for the school.

The school is justifiably proud of its enrichment to the curriculum. Pupils are taken on a variety of visits and a wide range of visitors are invited into the school. The many extra-curricular activities are well attended and significantly enhance standards, as was seen in the very good quality of singing and performance. A large number of pupils in the choir sang with great passion and in complete unison.

Grade: 3

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good because the school places a high priority on supporting all pupils. Parents and carers have regular opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their children's progress. They receive regular reports on how well their children are performing. Pupils say that they feel secure and very well cared for. They are confident in expressing their opinions and find staff helpful and approachable. Health and safety procedures are effective and regularly reviewed. There are very good arrangements for child protection and all adults recognise and actively promote the pupils' safety and well-being. The school works very well with external agencies to provide appropriate help for pupils with specific problems.

Standards are assessed regularly and inform target setting. The school has a clear picture of each pupil's progress, with a prediction of their potential attainment. However, as yet most pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own work and this is constraining their independent learning. Nonetheless, pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities are given opportunities to evaluate their progress effectively. A good programme for personal and health education ensures pupils are aware of how to stay healthy and safe.

Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely good and help pupils feel very secure in their learning.

Grade: 2

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher provides strong leadership and together with an effective team he is successfully improving all aspects of school life. Consequently, standards are improving and all pupils achieve well. Relationships are good and pupils are well cared for in a supportive, friendly environment. Every child is encouraged to do their best. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The governors are supportive and bring a wealth of expertise and experience. They now have a greater understanding of priorities and are fast developing effective approaches to governance. They have been instrumental, with the senior management team, in driving forward the building plans for an integrated school and ensuring the funding is in place.

The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is generally accurate. However, the rate of improvement is being hindered because key staff are not making enough checks on the quality of lessons. This means that the school does not have a consistently clear idea of what is needed to improve the quality of teaching even further. The school's resources are good and they are used well. Value for money is good.

The headteacher, his staff and governors have demonstrated a strong capacity to improve the school further. The school evaluated the quality of its leadership and management as satisfactory, which is accurate at the present time, but is fast improving.

Grade: 3

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 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?	2	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>	2	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	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	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>	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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**

Whitfield and Aspen Primary School Mayfield Road Whitfield Dover Kent CT16 3LJ

13 October 2005

Dear Pupils

I am writing to you to tell you about our visit to your school. I would like to start off by saying thank you very much for making us feel so welcome. Whenever we had questions to ask, you were kind enough to answer them carefully and patiently. You were also polite and kind to us.

Your work is what would be expected of pupils your age. This is because your teachers do a good job of teaching you. They and all the other adults in the school care for you well. You told us that this makes you feel happy and that you enjoy being in Whitfield and Aspen Primary School. We have suggested that when your teachers mark your work, it would help you if they told you exactly what you needed to do to improve your work even more.

You have a good headteacher who, with the help of senior staff and the governors, has made a lot of good changes to the school. The result has been an improvement in your test results, and a new building which is going to be built in February 2006, getting Whitfield and Aspen together as one school. Because of all these new things, the school is set to improve even more in the future. We have suggested that the teaching and your learning should be looked at by the adults in charge to make sure that these improvements continue.

Your behaviour is always good. You also get a lot of chances to take on responsibilities like the School Council. You told us that you were happy with the many opportunities that you had for making visits to so many places. You also said that you felt that you were lucky to have so many activities to take part in. We saw one such activity when the Choir sang so wonderfully during the school assembly. We were also very touched by all of you singing so well and with so much pleasure.

Thank you once again for making our visit a special one. We enjoyed talking to you, listening to your beautiful singing, taking part in celebrating your achievements and meeting you around the school. We wish you and your school the very best.

Dr. F. H. Mikdadi - Lead inspector