



Whitegate Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122739
LEA CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LEA
Inspection number 281331
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Newell LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Middlefell Way
School category	Community		NG11 9JQ
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01159152944
Number on roll	287	Fax number	01159152943
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Arthur Young
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Stephen Farr

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	Inspection number 281331
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors who spent a total of five inspector days in the school.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending this above average sized school live nearby although there is quite a high level of pupil mobility in some year groups. When children start at the school, their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding are well below what is expected for their age and many have poor communication and social skills. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Most pupils are from White British families, although a small percentage is from a range of minority ethnic groups. None of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The acting headteacher has been in post just over a term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Whitegate Primary and Nursery School is a satisfactory school that now has the capacity to improve further. This view is shared by the inspectors and the school. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership and has quickly established what the school needs to tackle to make it a better place. Pupils, and parents in particular, speak well of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school is providing satisfactory value for money. When children start at the school their levels of knowledge and understanding are well below average and communication and social skills are often poor. Standards by the end of the Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6 are well below average. Progress and achievement are satisfactory but could be better. There are pockets of good teaching in school where work set is challenging, learning is fun and pupils are enthused. This good practice does not happen enough and at times pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to take initiative or to be independent in their learning. As a result, pupils, particularly the more able, do not always progress as well as they could. There are strengths in aspects of school life. These lie in pupils' behaviour, how well pupils are cared for, after-school clubs, the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and how pupils are encouraged to keep safe, fit and healthy. Very good links have been established with outside agencies to support pupils with learning or behavioural problems. The school has started to address weaknesses in how well it sets challenging targets for pupils, how closely pupils' progress towards targets is measured and how it rigorously checks the quality of teaching in different subjects. Until recently, these areas have not been given enough priority to have the best impact on pupils' achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, do as well as they can, by setting work that is demanding and challenging. - Ensure that good use is made of information to check pupils' progress and to set targets that ask a lot of them. - Ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and standards in different subjects is checked regularly and rigorously. - Encourage pupils to take more initiative for, and to become more independent in, their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start at the school with skills and knowledge that are well below expectations for their age, with many having poor language and communication skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards remain well below average. Progress and achievement in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Test results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils show that standards are often well below average, and at times low, in English and mathematics. The school does better when its performance is compared to similar schools. The Year 6 test results in 2004 were better than in previous years but this level of attainment has not been maintained. This is partly due to the varying natural

ability of the different groups of pupils but also because too few pupils reach the higher levels expected of 11 year olds. Inspection findings show that standards for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are well below average in English, mathematics and science. Although an average percentage of pupils reach attainment levels expected for their ages, only a small percentage of pupils attain the higher expected levels. Whilst achievement is satisfactory, there is clearly room for improvement. There are times when not enough is expected of pupils, particularly the more able, and as a result pupils' progress is not as good as it could be. The school is already tackling the issue. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and the small percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is similar to that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils behave well and many are polite, friendly and courteous. Behaviour in the playground has improved because of the role played by the learning mentor and the manager of the 'Positive Play' project, which involves older pupils as play leaders and monitors. Pupils say bullying is not an issue and they feel safe and happy in school. Attitudes to school are generally positive. There are, however, pupils who are not actively involved in their own learning. This is not helped by the fact that teachers do not always provide enough opportunities, or encourage pupils, to take more initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and improving. Pupils' knowledge of how to stay fit, safe and healthy is good. The school runs a wide range of initiatives to support the choices needed to develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory. The school takes good account of pupils' views through the school council and pupil questionnaires. Pupils feel that their voices are listened to and that they can play a part in making the school a better place. There are adequate opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. Pupils are increasingly prepared to take responsibility for their own actions and to look out for one another. There is room for improvement in broadening pupils' awareness of life in a culturally diverse community and for developing pupils' enterprise skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and there are pockets of good practice in the school, particularly in Year 2 and for some of the oldest pupils. In these classes teaching is lively, rattles along at a good pace and makes sure that work is well matched and challenging to meet the needs of all pupils. When these strong features are not present, teaching is mainly satisfactory but occasionally inadequate. Across the school pupils are generally managed well and teaching assistants often make a telling contribution in supporting pupils' learning. Not all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to take initiative and

responsibility for their own learning and develop independence. When it does happen, pupils are more enthusiastic, motivated and eager to learn. The school has good procedures in place for assessing how well children and pupils are doing in all subjects of the curriculum. However, over time, the information has not been used rigorously or effectively enough to set challenging improvement targets for pupils, checking if targets have been met and taking action if they have not. The school is currently addressing this issue well. The school has also flagged up the need for pupils to play a more active role in setting and reviewing their own targets. At present this is not the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The school provides an appropriate focus on the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills and is working on ways of improving standards by developing these skills in other subjects of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a satisfactory balance of hands-on learning experiences and the direct teaching of key skills. The provision made for pupils' personal and health education is good. The good range of after-school clubs, performing arts shows, science weeks and a good array of visits and visitors all help to bring learning more to life. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is a strength of the school and enables pupils to take a full part in all that the school has to offer. There is equally good support for the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school recognises that there is room for improvement in how well it provides for the more able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' safety and security are good. Pupils know they have people to turn to for help. The learning mentor and the manager of the 'Positive Play' scheme support pupils particularly well. Pupils with behavioural and emotional problems are given good support and this has been successful in improving behaviour. Vulnerable pupils are supported equally well. The very good links that the school has forged with support agencies means outside help is always available if needed. Health and safety measures and child protection procedures are good, known and adhered to by all staff and reviewed regularly. The school works hard to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Staff know their pupils well, but, there is more work to be done in using the range of assessment information to track pupils' academic progress so that they can be better supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the acting headteacher are good. He took up post at Easter 2005 and quickly identified what the school needed to address to improve standards and achievement. He is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher. Together, they wasted no time in tackling issues such as improving target-setting and tracking and examining how teaching could be more demanding of the more able pupils to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. These efforts are beginning to have an impact on the work of the school but the headteacher realises there is still much work to be done. However, with the full support of all staff, the school is now well placed to move forward. A strength of the headteacher's leadership is shown in the good quality school self-evaluation. It takes account of the views of staff, parents, pupils and governors. It is honest and frank, and the school's own assertion that it is a satisfactory school is borne out by inspection findings. It outlines a challenging but accurate agenda of what is needed to make the school a better place. Key to this is the role played by all members of the senior management team and of subject leaders in finding out how good teaching, learning and standards are in different subjects and rigorously tackling weaknesses. This role has not been good enough over time. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the work of the school and there are strengths in the role played by the chair, vice-chair and some other governors. However, there is room for improvement in how the governing body as a whole develops a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school makes satisfactory use of its available resources to help it achieve satisfactory value for money.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Following our visit we would like to let you know what we found out about your school. But before we do that we would like to say thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so polite and helpful to us. We had a chance to talk to quite a lot of children in school and it was good to hear that you feel that there is always an adult to talk to if you have any problems and that you do not think that bullying is a problem in school. You probably saw quite a lot of us in classrooms, outside and in the dining hall. We thought that you behaved well and were always ready to help one another. We told your teachers how well behaved you were and they are all very proud of you. We know that many of you enjoy school and we have talked with your headteacher about ways of making school even better. Whilst some lessons are fun and exciting, there are times when work is a little bit too easy for some of you and the targets that teachers set for to help you improve could be a little more difficult. Teachers are also going to look more often at teaching in different classes and at your books to see if you are enjoying learning. Children can also help to make schools better places and Whitegate School is no different. We have said how well you behave but we think that learning could be even better if at times you tried to find things out for yourselves a bit more or helped your teachers by always being ready to ask or answer questions. All the staff at school want you to do well and your headteacher has some really good ideas to make Whitegate an even better school. We know that as children you can play your part and are sure you will do! We wish you every success in your futures. It was a pleasure to meet you all.