



Whitchurch Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123009
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281380
Inspection dates 13 July 2006 to 14 July 2006
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Eastfield Lane
School category	Community		Whitchurch-on-Thames
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Reading RG8 7EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 9842347
Number on roll	95	Fax number	0118 9842347
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Huntington
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr G W Mottram

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5 to 11	13 July 2006 - 14 July 2006	281380

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Whitchurch Primary school is smaller than average. Most of the pupils are White British and come from an area of social advantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or statements of special educational need is below average, as is the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at different times is average. There are more boys than girls in the school. The headteacher has been in post for almost two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whitchurch Primary considers itself to be a good school and this view is fully supported by the inspection findings. It provides a good quality of education, good value for money and has some outstanding features. Outstanding care, guidance and support enrich pupils' academic progress and lead to excellent personal development. This enables pupils to achieve successfully, and helps them to behave very well and show positive attitudes to learning. The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children an excellent start to their learning. Parents are very supportive of the school, describing it as 'a vibrant, relaxed and success-focused environment - a lovely place for children and parents'.

Leadership and management are good and there are particular strengths in the way in which the headteacher is driving school improvement. This is contributing significantly to the school's improving standards and achievement, although standards in writing are not yet as high as they could be. Standards are above average and are often higher in reading and science, but tend to fluctuate because of the changing balance of abilities in the small year groups. However, records show that the school's well planned provision enables all pupils to make good progress.

Teaching is good and the teachers' care and concern for each pupil increases their enjoyment of learning. Teachers are beginning to involve pupils very successfully in evaluating their own learning. The curriculum is good and is greatly enriched by a wide range of clubs.

Whilst the leadership and management of some subjects are very effective, similar procedures are not established for all subjects. Governors are well informed, supportive and involved. The school has successfully tackled the key issues raised at the previous inspection and has good capacity to build on its success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the initiative to raise standards and achievement in writing
- Extend the subject leadership roles to cover subjects other than English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' achievement is good because of the consistently good teaching which focuses on individual needs. The staff set, and the pupils achieve, suitably challenging targets.

Children enter the reception class with skills which are often better than those typically found in four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception year, most children meet the

expected goals in all areas of learning. The school is introducing strategies to ensure that this progress is built on successfully.

As year groups are small, the proportion of higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties inevitably varies from year to year. This causes standards through the school in reading, writing, mathematics and science to fluctuate. Overall, however, they are above average, and often higher. As the result of self-evaluation, the school is taking action to raise standards in writing, which although above average, are not as good as in reading, mathematics and science. This is beginning to bring about improvement.

Recently introduced tracking data is helping the school to identify and intervene in pupils' learning in order to accelerate their progress. Data showing the progress of individual pupils indicates that the school enables all pupils to make good progress as they move through Years 1 to 6, regardless of gender, ability or background.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school, with attendance being above average. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm for learning, saying that the teachers are 'so much fun'. Their behaviour is excellent and they learn to respect the values and views of others through assembly themes and group discussions. Their understanding of different cultures and traditions develops very well through subjects such as art, music and literature. Pupils take on responsibilities very willingly, the older pupils regularly taking care of the younger ones. They greatly value the opportunities they are given to influence school improvement through the school council and 'headteacher's tea'. They express their ideas very confidently about such issues as extending the school's range of sports equipment. They enjoy eating healthy foods in school and have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The pupils exercise energetically, taking full advantage of the many sporting activities that the school provides. Pupils' achievements in the basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT, prepare them very well for later life, as do other activities such as becoming involved in fund raising and running stalls at fetes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The teachers make learning fun and interesting and this motivates pupils. In a lesson that focused on addition and subtraction problems, the pupils' interest was stimulated by the teacher's enthusiasm and the good use of an interactive whiteboard. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties, and special provision for higher attaining pupils, ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in working

with small groups of pupils. The good relationships between adults and pupils help pupils to feel keen to learn, and to enhance their self-confidence. Pupils say 'The teachers listen. You can always get your point across.'

The Foundation Stage provides an excellent balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore and make choices. Children learn well because their progress is monitored closely and the work can therefore be carefully planned to build on what they already know.

The school has recently established good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress, which are helping teachers to keep track of how well each pupil is doing and to plan work accordingly. The school has rightly identified that it needs to extend these procedures across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It has recently been reviewed to ensure good balance and continuity within mixed-age classes. This has helped the school to identify ways in which the curriculum can be enriched through greater use of the local environment and the community. Educational visits and special events enhance the curriculum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about recent celebrations on American Independence Day. Pupils of all abilities are enabled to enjoy a full curriculum. Their personal development is enhanced through teaching about health, safety and relationships. The wide range of clubs provides strong encouragement to pupils to take exercise and to enjoy learning. The teachers successfully promote the use of pupils' basic skills across a range of subjects. This leads, for example, to interesting writing associated with topics on history. The curriculum for ICT has been improved significantly and is now fully integrated into all subjects. In the Foundation Stage, the stimulating curriculum promotes successful learning and good links with the on-site preschool ensure continuity in children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are outstanding and enable them to make excellent progress in their personal development. Procedures for child protection, risk assessments and the promotion of health and safety are very effective. As a result of comprehensive review, support for pupils with learning difficulties is now a significant strength. Links with other services are used very effectively to provide specialist help wherever it is needed.

Parents wholeheartedly support the school. One parent reflected the views of many by commenting 'We are impressed with the amount of care and concern each child receives'. The recent initiative to involve pupils in setting individual targets and in assessing their own progress towards them is working very successfully. Pupils speak knowledgeably about their targets and their progress towards them, and parents feel

better informed about their children's progress. The school is now working to develop this initiative further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, staff and governors are good and contribute significantly to the good progress made by the pupils. Particular features of the leadership of the headteacher are his very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and of the actions necessary to bring about improvement. He shares this knowledge with the staff and governors, and thoroughly involves them in school self-evaluation and planning for school improvement. He has created a strong sense of teamwork.

The school's self-evaluation is well founded and accurate and takes into account the views of parents and pupils. When weaknesses are identified, remedial action is taken to raise standards. A recent example is the intervention to improve learning in mathematics. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and carry out their roles effectively. They are well informed about the school's priorities and have been instrumental in initiatives such as increasing sporting opportunities for pupils. Subject leaders are enthusiastic about influencing development in their subjects, though these roles are not fully developed across all subjects. The monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work is used well to improve teaching and learning. The professional development of the staff is given high priority and is used effectively to improve teachers' individual skills and to promote school initiatives. A good example of this is the current focus on improving writing. Improvement in the past two years has been good and indicates that the school is well placed to continue this.

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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?	2	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	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

Pupils

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited Whitchurch recently and for talking to me about your school. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

Your parents and carers think that your school is a good place to be and I agree with them. You told me that you enjoy being in school and feel safe there. The grown ups look after you extremely well and you know that they will always help you if you are upset or worried. Your teachers give you lots of interesting things to do and this helps you to do well. You enjoy your work and try hard, but your teachers and I agree that some of you could achieve more. Your teachers have been helping you to do better in mathematics and writing and they are going to continue with this so that you do even better. Your headteacher, with the help of the teachers and governors, is good at finding ways to improve your school. Your teachers work hard to help each other to teach all subjects well and I have asked them to do more of this.

You eat lots of fruit and vegetables in school and are involved in many sports. These things help you to be healthy. You behave very well and show that you care for each other, and this helps to make your school a happy place. I am pleased that you enjoy sharing your ideas for making your school better through your school council and the headteacher's tea. I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector