



Whytemead First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125861
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282014
Inspection dates 20 September 2005 to 21 September 2005
Reporting inspector John Paull RISP

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

Type of school	First	School address	Dominion Road
School category	Community		Worthing
Age range of pupils	4 to 8		West Sussex BN14 8LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01903 202639
Number on roll	218	Fax number	01903 202639
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John O'Hara
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Ms Candy Reece

Age group 4 to 8	Inspection dates 20 September 2005 - 21 September 2005	Inspection number 282014
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Whytemead First School is located in the Broadwater East district of Worthing, where housing is mixed. Children enter from a range of different pre-school settings and recently, the number joining in older age-groups increased. Attainment on entry is average. About one sixth of pupils are on the school's register of learning difficulties and disabilities (similar to the national figure). The number of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English matches that of most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whytemead is a good school with many outstanding features. It provides good value for money. These judgements broadly match its view of itself. Parents share this opinion and pupils are proud to attend.

The headteacher, staff and governors have embarked on a quest for excellence and what they have done already suggests that they will succeed in their aim. Some of the systems that they use to check and monitor their work are fairly new, so more time is needed before their effectiveness will be complete. Pupils' standards on entry are average, but the range is very wide. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are given the support that they need to achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, with several outstanding features. By the end of Year 2, pupils have progressed well academically and have thrived personally. Standards in writing are exceptionally high. This strong performance is sustained in Year 3. The curriculum is excellent. Planning ensures that the body of knowledge in one subject is linked to all others, which helps pupils to understand and enjoy what they do. Improvement since the last inspection, when the school was already doing well, is clearly evident. Weaknesses in religious education and lack of opportunities in a few elements of personal development have been put right.

Strong and knowledgeable leadership and management and good teamwork amongst the staff are the main reasons for the school's success. Good features are recognised quickly and shared with others; weaker areas are identified successfully so that improvements can occur.

What the school should do to improve further

- To achieve its goal of excellence, this good school should:
- ensure that its more recently introduced systems for monitoring performance are applied as consistently as possible, and
- then use the information that is gathered to raise standards in other subjects to the outstanding levels that are already achieved in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average, whilst pupils' writing is often outstanding by the end of Year 2, which continues in Year 3. The main reason for this strong performance in writing is that children's speech is developed very thoroughly throughout the school. From the moment that they begin in the Reception class, what is taught in all subjects entails frequent opportunities for role-play, drama and discussion. As a result, pupils acquire an enriched vocabulary for their age, which is reflected in their writing. Standards and achievement are good across the curriculum. Pupils take pride in their achievements and use their skills in handwriting and

presentation to good effect. Progress amongst different groups, including those with learning difficulties, is good and nearly all pupils achieve well.

In the Reception Year, equally good progress occurs in all areas of learning except personal, social and emotional development, which is very good. Teaching is sensitive to the wide range of previous placements from which children enter. This approach pays off as children settle well and then learn quickly, which results in good achievement.

Low standards in religious education, apparent in the inspection of 1999, have been improved and now match what is expected. In Year 2, for example, pupils understand some of the meaning in stories, such as The Good Samaritan and The Lost Sheep and relate it to their own experiences. Literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are used well to support work in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show great enjoyment of and enthusiasm for learning. Their behaviour is exceptionally good because they know that their teachers have high expectations of them and pupils try hard to live up to them. Pupils are friendly and form very positive relationships with everyone in school. Children in Reception make very good progress in their personal development because all adults help them to grow in confidence, and independence. Individual attendance certificates and the award of Oscar Bear are given for 100% attendance over the course of a week. These methods are proving successful in cutting absences.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good as a result of thoughtful assemblies, special events and visits and a very well planned curriculum. Pupils learn the importance of healthy eating through science and health education, while an exceptionally good range of games and activities on the playground provides many opportunities for daily exercise, besides which takes place in physical education. School councillors are very proud of their role and especially of their yellow hats which they wear in the playground to help with their task of being a friend to all. Raising money for various causes, such as the Tsunami Appeal, helps to give children a wider view of the world and makes them aware of their own place within it. In Year 3, a debate about whether Chichester Harbour should be developed provided pupils with valuable insights into environmental and economic issues.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall, teaching and learning are good. Basic skills are taught well from the Reception Year onward. Writing is consistently taught to a high quality. The school's English co-ordinator has very good knowledge of how pupils' written work should be based on first developing a rich spoken vocabulary in all subjects and situations. Excellent

co-operation between the staff, good planning and teamwork have ensured that this approach is put into practice. It has proved highly successful. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, at this early stage in the school year, organisation and planning were outstanding. What was taught about the human senses was of a high standard. Methods were similar to those that pupils would have been used to in their Reception classes last term, producing a remarkably smooth transition. It was based on highly practical tasks and a strong emphasis on using "good words". As a result, pupils were excited by their learning and their progress was rapid. All lessons that were observed were of good quality at the least, which reflected information in the school's monitoring records. Pupils therefore learn effectively, which is the main reason for their positive achievements.

Systems designed to assess and follow up pupils' progress through the school are good. The headteacher is implementing them flexibly to ensure that enough information is gathered to compare groups and to make fully informed decisions. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) in this respect is outstanding, resulting in excellent provision for pupils with learning and other difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very stimulating curriculum, which contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment and achievements. Subjects are linked imaginatively around carefully chosen themes to make learning interesting, relevant and equally appealing to boys and girls. These topics ensure a good emphasis on learning to stay healthy and safe. Very good provision for literacy and numeracy, together with effective use of ICT to support learning across all subjects, ensures that pupils are equipped with the basic skills necessary for their future success. Excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties ensures that they have clear targets to pursue that are reviewed frequently. An outstanding emphasis on creativity is evident in the high quality art and design work on display and constant opportunities for drama, role play, discussion, dance and music. An exceptional range of additional activities, including 12 after-school clubs, further enhances this outstanding provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support of pupils are a significant strength and make a powerful contribution to their personal development and well-being. Every child is valued highly and treated as an individual. Very good arrangements to ensure safety and to promote good health are evident. Statutory arrangements for protecting children are fully in place. Relations with outside agencies, such as the Family Link Worker, to safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable children are very good. Parents are rightly very pleased with the ways in which they are involved in their children's learning that include, for example, Family Learning courses. Very good arrangements exist to ease children's entry to the school. As a result, they settle in quickly and begin to learn straight away, gaining in confidence and independence. Provision such as the 'friendship

group' and school councillors' yellow hats help to make pupils feel cared for and fully supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher possesses outstanding leadership qualities, including a clear view that Whytemead is on a quest for excellence. She is clear about its direction and conveys her ideas easily to members of staff, parents and governors alike. Key skills that are needed to build the school are reflected in her strategic planning and recently introduced systems and structures of management. Some of this reorganisation has not been in place for long enough to bear fruit fully. She was appointed only two years ago, so this is not surprising. What is obvious is that an already good school is improving well under her direction. Governors are supportive and involved fully in planning, and statutory requirements are met effectively. Coordination of subjects is good and some features are already outstanding. For example, excellence is evident in the way that pupils' writing has been approached and developed, and the way in which provision for pupils with learning difficulties is managed. The headteacher, staff and governors know what is needed to spread such excellence to other areas and, based on what has been done so far, are well placed to manage it.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	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	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?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	NA
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

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to the inspectors who visited your school. We very much enjoyed looking at your work and coming to your lessons. We especially enjoyed chatting with so many of you over lunchtime and around the building!

What we like most about your school:

We like how hard you work and what you achieve; We also think that you behave very well

You are kind and thoughtful to each other and we especially liked meeting the School Councillors and hearing about their yellow hats

There are lots of good things for all of you to do in your lessons and we especially enjoyed the descriptions and stories that you write

Your teachers teach you well and all the adults take very good care of you, helping you to feel safe and sound.

What we have asked your headteacher, the staff and the school's governors to think about next:

To keep looking carefully at your good work and to help you to make everything as excellent as your writing is already.