



Whitehorse Manor Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101743
Local Authority Croydon
Inspection number 286167
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Whitehorse Road
School category	Community		Thornton Heath
Age range of pupils	3-7		CR7 8SB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8689 7679
Number on roll (school)	232	Fax number	020 8689 1557
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Hill
		Headteacher	Miss L Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most of its type. It serves an area of considerable deprivation and is over-subscribed. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high; Black Caribbean and Black African pupils form the largest groups. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average. Children begin the Nursery with low skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which rightly enjoys the confidence and support of parents. This is summed up by one parent who wrote, 'I feel that I made an excellent choice in applying to this school for my son.' Another parent's comment helps to explain the school's success: 'The staff are extremely hard working and dedicated and really value children's learning.' As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding, enabling them to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also good.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are very polite and friendly. The atmosphere in all classes is one of hard work mixed with great interest and enjoyment. This is because teachers strive to make lessons both interesting and challenging, as was seen in a Year 1 English lesson. Pupils were writing stories about an adventure in a rain forest. One wrote, 'I saw ants scuttling round by my feet.' Excellent teaching enables pupils to make great strides in their learning, whatever their ability level. The school employs plenty of support staff. They add much to pupils' learning because teachers make the best use of their skills to give help where it is most needed. This ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve their potential and that pupils with English as an additional language progress as quickly as others.

The outstanding curriculum is designed to capture pupils' interests. Lessons are enlivened by activities such as drama, puppetry and cooking. Pupils make good use of modern technology, such as filming video clips of their own drama sessions, which they use to reflect on what they have learnt. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are well cared for and that any problems are suitably dealt with. One young pupil spoke of one of the things he likes best about the school: 'I feel safe.' Parents echo this.

Children in the Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their learning. They receive a good mixture of free choice activities and opportunities to work with adults. Careful assessments are used to make sure that children are making excellent progress. The school has worked hard to create attractive learning areas outside the classroom, though the elderly buildings do not easily lend themselves to this. These spaces are used well to promote children's learning, but that for the Reception classes is small and children are not able to go in and out of the classroom with ease.

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher and deputy headteacher give excellent direction to the school's work and are unceasing in the challenge which they give to the work of staff. This leads to similar high expectations for all pupils, resulting in outstanding progress in both their academic work and personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no major issues because of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. The following is a priority for the current year:

- Investigate ways of improving access to the outside areas for Reception children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Standards are low when children begin in the Nursery, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their dispositions and attitudes to learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Pupils make excellent progress in all three subjects; writing results are a little lower than those in reading because they begin from a very low base.

The school tracks the progress of individuals and of all the groups that make up its classes. Records show that boys and girls make similar progress, as do all ethnic groups. The best progress is made by Black Caribbean pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported by the good number of trained assistants and make excellent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties also make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their understanding of a healthy lifestyle is very advanced for their years. One pupil said, 'It's not that you can't eat chocolate - just don't eat too much of it.' Another pupil took up this theme of a balanced diet: 'You do need a bit of sugar because you need energy.' They appreciate the value of exercise and know that children need more of it than the inspector because they 'grow and need to be strong.' Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that, if unkind behaviour happens, adults deal with it well. Behaviour is excellent; this is the result of much hard work on the part of all adults and pupils alike. Pupils love the traffic light system of warnings and say it really helps remind them how to behave. Their great enjoyment of school is shown by above average attendance and no exclusions. One parent commented that her child loves school so much that 'she even says that her children are going to study in Whitehorse'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a well developed sense of community and say their school council makes the school more exciting: 'They get to talk to important people.' The whole school community is a model of excellent racial harmony. Pupils' outstanding progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT stands them in good stead for their future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding, enabling pupils to make excellent progress in their work and personal development. Positive relationships between adults and pupils are the basis of outstanding learning. One parent commented: 'Teachers and the team are friendly, patient and she is learning so much and enjoys going to school.' High expectations are another of the ingredients of high quality teaching, and this begins with the headteacher and deputy. Teachers are regularly challenged to ensure that their predictions for pupils' attainment are as realistically high as possible. The fruit of this is seen in the excellent progress evident in pupils' written work. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very well to enhance learning. An example was observed in a Year 2 class, where the teacher showed cartoons of coins in a purse and challenged pupils to use a range of times-table facts to find the total.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Teachers tailor the work they give pupils closely to their ability, ensuring that the curriculum meets their needs very well. An example of this is the daily reading sessions, to which parents are invited. Teachers and assistants make daily observations of pupils' progress and ensure that they are reading at the right level. Lessons are interesting as well as challenging; as one parent put it, 'They come home with something new every day'. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is excellent and links these subjects together well; for example, pupils use floor robots in a game designed to teach them to recognise coins or learn letter sounds. Very good use is made of outside institutions, such as the Crystal Palace Study Centre, to give particular help to groups of pupils. The curriculum is further enriched by a range of visits and visitors, which contribute much to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. One parent wrote, 'The school offers a very friendly, safe and stimulating environment for our children.' Procedures for child protection, health and safety are extremely rigorous and effective. All adults have consistently high expectations of behaviour, to which pupils respond very well. Lunchtime playtime is great fun because adults involve themselves in games and make sure that the pupils are happy. Another parent commented, 'The school strikes a good balance between expecting good behaviour and valuing children as individuals'. Academic guidance is outstanding because it is frequent and searching. Its effective use is a key factor in the outstanding progress that pupils make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because self-evaluation is rigorous and effective. Monitoring of teaching is used very well to deal with any weaker aspects and records show the success of subsequent training and support. The impact which leadership and management have on improving teaching and pupils' progress shows that there is excellent capacity to make further improvements. The school development plan has a small number of chief priorities whose progress is closely followed. One of these concerns the outdoor areas in the Foundation Stage. The area is attractive and used well, but has limitations. The school has consulted widely and drawn up plans, all of which involve considerable expense, to turn what was once a Victorian school yard into a modern learning environment. Governors do not have many opportunities to monitor the school's work at first hand; however, they give very good support to the school and offer appropriate challenge to its work.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I had a really enjoyable day in your school recently and thank you for the very friendly way you welcomed me. One of your parents told me that her child is very proud of the school, and I can see why. It is a lovely place to learn, make friends and have a good time.

I agree with you and your parents: Whitehorse Manor is an outstanding school. (Outstanding is another word for excellent.) Teaching is excellent and helps you to make enormous progress with important skills, such as reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. Many of you told me how much you enjoy using your ICT suite.

All the adults work hard to make sure you do your best. You are lucky to have so many of them in each class, and they are really good at helping you. I noticed how well they work with those of you who are just learning to speak English.

Your headteacher and her deputy do an excellent job at running your school. I could not find anything for them to improve that they were not already doing. So, I have suggested that they keep on trying to make the areas outside the Reception classrooms easier for you to use.

I'm sure you will continue to do well at Whitehorse Manor.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray
Inspector