



# Whetstone Field Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104198  
**Local Authority** Walsall  
**Inspection number** 286877  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Rajinder Harrison

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Beaufort Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Aldridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Walsall WS9 0HJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 743498
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	248	<b>Fax number</b>	01922 743498
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Thorley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Fielder
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is of average size and is regularly over-subscribed. Although the school has a small number of pupils from other ethnic heritages, most are from White British backgrounds. All pupils from other ethnic heritages speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is low, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. The high commitment to help every child achieve well underpins the excellent partnership between home and school. Parents hold the school in high regard, and appreciate the warm and welcoming atmosphere in which their children grow and thrive. Pupils know school is important and always try to do their best, settling very promptly and purposefully to their work. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, particularly in lessons. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils willingly help each other in lessons so that everyone can succeed. They feel safe, secure and happy at school and trust their teachers. Pupils extend kindness and care by helping around the school and looking after others when problems arise. A good curriculum, well supported through a very good range of additional experiences, engenders in pupils a real enthusiasm for learning. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their computer skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They leave in Year 6 as very mature young people who are very well prepared for the future. They are encouraged to voice their ideas and take an active role in making decisions in class discussions and through the school council. Through environmental projects and local community events they learn to appreciate their role in the wider world. Pupils show a good understanding of how to take care of themselves and keep fit, healthy and safe.

Good teaching results in pupils achieving well and reaching standards that are exceptionally high overall in Year 6. Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge above the levels typical of this age. Excellent provision results in all children exceeding the expected levels at the end of the Reception year. Their achievement is exceptional. These high standards are maintained through Years 1 to 6. Care, guidance and support arrangements are outstanding, particularly with regard to pupils' safety and personal development. Academic guidance is also very good. All pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Procedures to monitor their progress and identify those who would benefit from extra support, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are excellent. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are not high enough. They are sometimes held back by having to do the same work as others.

Good leadership and management by the headteacher, staff and governors have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. High standards have been maintained through the astute management of resources. Improved provision for art has resulted in pupils producing some high quality work. The school monitors its performance diligently. Lessons are monitored regularly. However by focusing on teaching rather than learning, it does not always check that all pupils are challenged fully. The school has an accurate view of its performance and is in a good position to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more-able pupils have more demanding work in all lessons.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practise and use their computer skills.
- Monitor teaching more rigorously to check that all pupils are challenged fully.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and pupils attain exceptionally high standards in Year 6. Children start in the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are above average in all areas of learning. An excellent balance of teacher-led tasks and independent activities in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures all children make very rapid gains. By the start of Year 1 their attainment is exceptionally high, with more than half working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum in literacy and numeracy.

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, progress well in Years 1 to 6. In the 2006 national assessments, Year 2 pupils attained standards that were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Current Year 2 pupils are working at similar levels of attainment. In the same year, results for Year 6 pupils were exceptionally high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. With rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and very good additional support, the school is well placed to achieve its more challenging targets this year.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Excellent attendance, relationships and behaviour, and tremendous enthusiasm for learning reflect pupils' outstanding personal development. They tackle new work confidently, using their initiative to work independently or with others. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, by becoming playground buddies or helping around the school. Most pupils show a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise and, for example, regularly attend the various fitness clubs. A few still choose less healthy options at lunchtime.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They respect others' views in discussion, take turns when sharing resources and help each other unprompted. Through projects such as re-designing the sensory garden, they understand the importance of caring for their environment. Pupils are very aware of the richness and diversity in society. This results from exploring other faiths and learning from visitors such as the Native American Indian who entranced them with his traditional folklore, music and dance. Through the school council, pupils develop leadership, budgeting and decision-making skills. Their very good contribution to the community includes raising funds for charity, organising concerts and visiting the elderly. They gain an excellent insight into the world of work from the many visitors they meet.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning result in pupils achieving well. Pupils' enthusiasm is evident. As some said, 'It's exciting to learn new things'. Attractive displays remind pupils of previous learning and teachers build on this through planning work that captures their interest. In outstanding lessons, where expectations are very high, pace is brisk as teachers pose searching questions that make pupils think for themselves. Independence is encouraged from the start of Nursery so pupils become confident young learners. They work hard, listen attentively and conduct sensible discussions with their classmates. In most lessons, the high level of challenge ensures that all pupils learn at a rapid pace. Occasionally, this challenge is missing and more-able pupils do the same work as others.

Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and most teachers use this information effectively to modify their planning. Most pupils know their targets and excellent relationships give them the confidence to ask for help in achieving them. Very good support from both teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to participate fully in lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

With a very rich variety of activities and experiences, the excellent curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes results in their outstanding achievement. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum prepares pupils well for the future by providing all that it should. Occasionally, too much emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy and opportunities for pupils to use their computer skills to support their learning in these and other subjects such as history and science are limited. The extra support to help more-able pupils reach higher standards in mathematics in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 does not extend to other subjects and other year groups. The well-planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme promotes pupils' personal development very effectively. Residential visits provide pupils with valuable opportunities to extend their social skills. Visits and visitors, such as artists, musicians and dancers, make the curriculum come to life. Many interesting activities after school extend the curriculum well. Very good links with organisations such as sports clubs, secondary schools and the university enable pupils with particular talents to develop them further.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Pastoral care is strong, particularly for more vulnerable pupils and those new to the school. Pupils say that the very rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and that if they need to, they can ask any adult for help in the school. Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure.

Pupils' progress is carefully checked, especially in literacy, numeracy and science. Any pupils not making the expected rate of progress are quickly identified and given additional support. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported very effectively and external agencies are involved when necessary. The school sets pupils challenging targets and almost without exception these are achieved. While not always evident in teachers' marking, pupils say they receive very good advice on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Relationships with parents are very good. They appreciate the high quality information they receive regarding their children's progress and say that the school is always approachable should they have a concern.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good leadership and management have secured the school's continued success. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is energetic in achieving it. She is supported well by a good senior leadership team and an active governing body. Governors are regularly involved in checking the school's performance and asking the right questions. Improving the current high standards is a high priority and all staff understand what they need to do to realise this through improving aspects of teaching and developing a more creative curriculum.

Effective self-evaluation is central to the school's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This has resulted in effective recent action to improve pupils' attainment further through the introduction of appropriate intervention strategies. Although there is a programme of lesson observations, the monitoring of teaching is not currently rigorous enough in checking that all pupils are fully challenged. The school improvement plan is comprehensive, but success criteria need a sharper focus.

Money is spent wisely. The school's facilities and resources, particularly staffing levels, are very good and support teaching and learning very effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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 am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work that you do and talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so friendly, polite and sensible. Please thank your parents for filling in a form that gave us their views about the school and we are delighted that everyone likes it so much. We particularly liked the way you all get on with each other so nicely. I really loved watching the children in the Nursery make delicious porridge!

Here are some of things that make your school good.

- You love being there, always do your best and achieve excellent standards by the end of Year 6.
- The school takes excellent care of you and you have many people to help you.
- Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and fun for you.
- Your behaviour is excellent and many of you choose really healthy lunches.
- The school organises so many very good activities and visits and makes sure that you meet interesting people who help you learn new things.

There are a few things that could be better.

- Those of you who can do harder work need to be given this in every lesson.
- You could have more opportunities to use computers in your lessons.
- Teachers need to check that everyone is learning as much as they can in every lesson.

It is brilliant that you love school so much and we hope that you continue to do well.