



Whitgreave Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104297
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286902
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Goodyear Avenue
School category	Community		Low Hill
Age range of pupils	7–11		Wolverhampton WV10 9JP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558930
Number on roll (school)	194	Fax number	01902 558932
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Brenda Hawkins
		Headteacher	Denise Dalton
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school is situated in an area of high social deprivation. A well above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and the majority of pupils are White British. The school is a part of an Excellence in Cities scheme. The school has had four headteachers since the previous inspection, the most recent has been in post for 18 months and has appointed five new members of staff, three of whom are newly qualified teachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it reasonably is expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

Although the school is improving its overall effectiveness is inadequate. Since the headteacher took up her appointment she has faced significant barriers in her drive to raise standards. Weaknesses in teaching and the unsatisfactory behaviour of pupils have resulted in pupils' inadequate achievement and the standards attained in English, mathematics and science are low. Pupils' readiness for the next stage of education is constrained by these low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. There has been resistance to change by some members of staff and the management systems in place were ineffective.

New staff have been appointed and teaching is at least satisfactory with good teaching in Year 6. Good relationships between staff and pupils and better behaviour mean pupils are more willing to learn and consequently their progress is improving. The curriculum is now good and visits, visitors and focus weeks make learning more interesting for the pupils. Lesson planning is more effective and teachers are starting to involve pupils in knowing what they are expected to learn and how to improve their work. There is still work to do, however, to raise teachers' expectations further, increase the pace of learning and to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged.

The headteacher has been successful in establishing an environment that encourages learning. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory as are care, guidance and support. Pupils say they feel much safer in school than they did in the past and they know that adults will always take the time to listen to their concerns. Bullying is rare and as one pupil said 'There are still unkind people, but I say to them, it doesn't make you look big, in fact it makes you look quite small!'

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Evaluation is mainly accurate but the school has a too generous view of its overall effectiveness, achievement and standards. This is because the headteacher evaluated the potential of the school rather than its present day effectiveness. However, the school has correctly identified the actions required to bring about improvement. This shows the leadership's secure understanding of what needs to be done to improve. As a part of this drive, new management systems, including a system for tracking pupils' progress, has been introduced. This tracking system is very new and does not clearly identify the expected progress of pupils. As yet staff are not held accountable for how well their pupils achieve. Even so, the recent improvements, alongside the leadership's strong commitment and determination, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of by increasing the pace of learning and ensuring that work is matched closely to all pupils' needs.
- Refine the existing tracking system so the progress pupils are expected to make is clearly identified and staff become more accountable for this.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Attainment on entry to Year 3 has changed significantly since the previous inspection from exceptionally low to broadly average. Despite this improvement, standards by Year 6 remain low. Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Last year, as a result of better teaching the standards reached by Year 6 pupils improved. However achievement is still unsatisfactory overall because this was a more able group than those in the past. Pupils' standards currently are not high enough in Years 4, 5 and 6, but their progress is improving because of better teaching and the clear focus now in the school on raising achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are increasingly positive in their attitudes to school and behaviour is satisfactory. However, pupils do not always behave in a sensible way when lessons fail to engage their interest. Pupils show respect for one another, for example by taking turns and assisting others who are hurt or upset at playtime. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying has been reduced. While children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, pupils' cultural awareness of famous artists, musicians and writers is limited. Attendance is improving but remains below average. This is despite the school's considerable effort to bring about improvement through strategies such as 'a walking bus'. Pupils explain what constitutes a healthy diet and know the importance of physical activity. However, pupils admit that while they know about healthy foods they still choose to eat less healthy options each day. Pupils are enthusiastic about fund raising for local charities and have worked with local architects to improve the area, for example by naming a local street.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has eliminated the unsatisfactory teaching of the past that led to pupils' inadequate progress. The improvements made to the quality of teaching are beginning to show through in the way that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate, particularly

in Year 6 where there is good teaching. Planning is improving and is based on national guidance. Although what teachers want pupils to learn is clearly identified, this information is not always shared with pupils. Teachers are not always setting work that matches pupils' different abilities. In some lessons they do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to do resulting in a slow rate of learning. Some teachers are taking more account of the newly introduced pupils' targets and some of their marking of pupils' work refers to these. This good practice helps the pupils to know how they are getting on and what they need to learn next. The learning support assistants are deployed well to support small groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are set work that is satisfactorily matched to their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been improved recently and it now reflects the school's recent push to make it more interesting and creative. Good links with other organisations including the local secondary school and the local authority have led to an improved English and mathematics curriculum. These subjects are now becoming more tailored to pupils' needs and this is contributing to pupils' improved progress.

Greater interest is achieved through enrichment activities such as focus weeks, when all the school works together on a project such as developing the art curriculum. Visitors and visits add further enrichment. A good range of after school activities, including yoga, netball, street dancing and football, is provided. Open to all ages, these clubs have high rates of participation and pupils say 'the clubs are good because they help you to keep fit'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents say their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils agree, knowing that they can speak to adults in school about any concerns. This atmosphere of care has a positive impact on learning as pupils are generally relaxed and ready to learn. More vulnerable pupils, including those experiencing behavioural difficulties, receive good support from outside agencies which ensures they learn alongside their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive sensitive support.

Guidance to help pupils with their learning is being developed well. Recent strategies for involving pupils in evaluating how to improve the quality of their work shows promise. However, these strategies are new and not yet having a full impact on improving achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is shared commitment amongst all adults in school to raise standards and the staff and governors are working together to achieve this key priority. Past weaknesses

are being overcome successfully and the headteacher has identified the right priorities to make this school more effective. The newly established leadership team has made a positive start with clear actions to improve achievement. Governors are well informed and are providing increasingly good guidance.

The climate for learning is much better as a result of improved behaviour and pupils having a more positive attitude towards learning. In the past, insufficient attention was given to checking the quality of teaching and the influence of teaching on pupils' progress. New checking systems have been introduced to rectify weaknesses, but have had insufficient time to influence the legacy of underachievement. However, the improved progress since September of the majority of pupils is encouraging. More information is now given to staff about the levels at which pupils are working. However staff do not identify the expected progress of pupils and are not sufficiently accountable for their progress.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you. We think that in the past many of you have not learned as well as you should have done. However, things are becoming much better as your headteacher, governors and teachers are starting to make improvements to your learning.

These are the things we particularly liked about your school

- Your headteacher knows exactly what needs to be done to improve the way you learn.
- You are all now behaving much better both in class and outside in the playground so time is not wasted dealing with bad behaviour.
- You feel safe in school and feel that adults will listen if you are worried.
- You are becoming more involved in knowing how to improve your work.

These are the things we have asked the school to improve

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that all of you learn as well as you can in English, mathematics and science.
- We have asked your teachers to plan work that makes you all think as hard as you can and work as quickly as you are able.
- We have asked your headteacher to make sure that teachers are very clear about how much progress you should make throughout the year and to check carefully that this happens.

Of course, how well you do at school is not all about what others do; you can help yourselves by working hard and taking part in what the school offers.