



Whiston Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 106894
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287641
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Jane Hughes

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Saville Road
School category	Community		Whiston, Rotherham
Age range of pupils	5–11		South Yorkshire S60 4DX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 828189
Number on roll (school)	176	Fax number	01709 828189
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Johnson
		Headteacher	Mr John Evans
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	30–31 January 2007	287641

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and speak English as their first language. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals or has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some strengths in its work. Inspection findings confirm the school's own self-evaluation of its effectiveness and most areas of its work. Even so, it is too modest in its judgement of the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage. Conversely, leaders overstate the quality of the overall care, guidance and support they offer pupils and also the school's capacity to improve. Current performance reflects satisfactory leadership and management by the headteacher, senior leaders and governors. They identify the correct priorities to improve the achievement of older pupils and to raise the standards they attain. As a result, the school demonstrates a sound capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Nevertheless, average and higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are capable of reaching higher standards in writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is outstanding. This reflects the excellent quality and provision in the Foundation Stage and high quality teaching in Years 1 and 2. These characteristics result in well above average standards by Year 3. Average and higher attaining pupils do not maintain their earlier very good rate of progress in Years 4 to 6. Learning slows because lessons offer lower levels of challenge and pupils receive less guidance on how to improve their work. Furthermore, the school's monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough to develop teachers' skills and improve pupils' learning at a fast enough rate. This results in the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning overall.

The satisfactory curriculum offers varied opportunities for pupils to participate in new experiences both in school and out in the wider community. They learn about safe and healthy lifestyles and recognise how to improve their long-term life chances. Satisfactory levels of care, guidance and support include close attention to pupils' well-being and personal development. Systems to support and guide pupils' academic progress are satisfactory, albeit newly established. Good partnerships with parents, other schools and the wider community enhance the school's neighbourhood reputation. At the same time, these add to pupils' enjoyment of school and extend their organisational abilities, a useful life skill. The school values and includes all pupils equally so that they enjoy school and behave well. Their personal development is good because the school places a high priority on developing well-rounded individuals who show respect for others as well as an interest in learning. Pupils become increasingly useful members of the school and local community. This prepares them well in terms of their future well-being. Parents say, 'children flourish here', and show full confidence in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of average and higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 in writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Monitor teaching more rigorously to improve pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with skills broadly in line with expectations for their age. They grow rapidly in confidence and almost all attain the expected levels and beyond by Year 1. This flying start, coupled with outstanding achievement, continues through Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of teachers' consistently high expectations and the levels of challenge they pose in lessons. Whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 6, they are not all doing as well as they should, given their starting points. Average attainment in English, mathematics and science reflects the more inconsistent levels of challenge for average and higher attaining pupils in Years 4 to 6. Lower than predicted 2006 test results, particularly for some average and higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics, alerted the school to gaps in pupils' learning. These are now more readily identified through stronger assessment procedures. Pupils of all ages with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and, consequently, achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They say, 'this is a very friendly school'. Good attendance reflects pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Parents play an important part in supporting children's learning by ensuring they come to school regularly. There are good systems to monitor and follow up absence. Staff work closely with other schools and the local community so that pupils learn more about life beyond school. They visit local secondary schools to participate in sporting and science activities and enjoy learning French. Pupils are conscious of the clear safety messages given by staff and visiting adults, such as police, nurses and dentists. Parents and governors underline safety messages, for instance, during cycling proficiency courses. Pupils can identify elements of healthy lifestyles and are aware of hazards to their well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to respect others and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils take responsibility around school, as conscientious playground leaders, for example. Visits and interesting topic work help to extend their knowledge of their own and others' cultures. Parents comment that, 'the school takes extra care to include pupils from different backgrounds'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies. There is outstanding teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 because teachers prepare challenging work, tailored to individual

needs, and have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are brisk and teachers' questioning is exceptionally good. Consequently, the younger pupils learn rapidly and achieve very well. In particular, they enjoy honing their lifelong learning skills through problem-solving in mathematics and investigative work in science. The pace of pupils' learning is good in Year 3, but then slows in Years 4 to 6, because teachers do not match work as well to pupils' needs. Teachers set class, group and individual targets in English and mathematics. They use assessment outcomes effectively to help lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school identifies difficulties early on. Effective strategies, implemented largely by skilled teaching assistants, help these pupils to make good and sometimes better progress. However, teachers in Years 4 to 6 do not make consistently good enough use of assessment information in lessons to stretch some average and higher attaining pupils. For example, there are too few planned opportunities for independent, problem-solving or investigative work. Teachers mark written work positively but comments to help pupils improve are inconsistent. This is particularly the case in writing, which is a school focus for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 provides extremely good learning opportunities that develop especially well pupils' personal, social and communication skills. Elsewhere, teachers build pupils' skills progressively and the curriculum is planned soundly. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their basic skills are well developed overall. Increasingly, the school provides an extensive range of enjoyable experiences for pupils that increase their self-confidence, as well as their physical and creative performance. Good use of information and communication technology and creative arts enriches topics. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and contributes to pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. A range of educational visits to the local area extends pupils' local knowledge. The Year 6 residential visit and sporting or dramatic extra-curricular activities enhance their learning and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults know pupils well and take good care of them within a positive learning environment. Parents remark that the school has, 'a wonderful welcoming feel'. Pupils say they feel safe and that, 'adults are very kind', so they enjoy their learning. Procedures are in place for child protection and to ensure pupils' safety and security. There is good support from staff and outside agencies for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. Very good induction procedures ensure a smooth entry for children into Reception and on to Year 1. Pupils receive very good guidance to improve their work in Reception and Years 1 and 2. However, this is not consistently the case in Years 4 to 6. Pupils do not always receive sufficient guidance about how to improve their work. Valuable

partnerships with local high schools in science and mathematics benefit pupils and help them move on easily to their next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are committed to raising the achievement of pupils and recognise there is still work to do. As senior leaders do not monitor lessons with sufficient rigour, opportunities to improve the quality of teaching are missed. Teachers have little time to improve their work by learning from the very good practice that is available in the school. Subject leaders are increasingly influential in improving performance in their subjects. Efficient administrators, site supervisors and lunchtime staff help the school to run smoothly. Governors show firm commitment to the school. They have a clear overview of its priorities. Although they bring expertise, for example, in terms of financial acumen, they do not hold the school sufficiently to account for its performance.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	3
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	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school with Mrs Dawson. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing your views on life at Whiston.

Many of you told us how much you like your school. You feel that all the adults are very kind and take good care of you. We agree that there are good things in your school which we judge to be satisfactory, overall. Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and reach high standards. You all behave well and work happily together in lessons. You learn to swim in your own pool and enjoy all the clubs. Adults take good care of you and help you with any worries you have. They also give you good advice about how to keep healthy and stay safe. There is a cheerful atmosphere in school and the older children look out well for the younger ones. Your parents told us that you are happy at school. We were pleased that most of you come to school regularly and on time. This means you do not miss important work and also that you are reliable - an important quality for your future success.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see how your school could improve. We have asked all the adults in school to help those of you able to reach average or above average standards to do better in your writing and mathematics work in Years 4, 5, and 6. To help with this, we have also asked your school to check the quality of lessons throughout the school more carefully. This will help the adults to see how to help you do even better, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6.

You can be very helpful by continuing to do your best, working and playing hard. Your parents should be able to play their part too, by checking the progress you are making towards the targets you are given.