

Whiteways Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106992
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	287672
Inspection dates	11–12 July 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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Tomlinson
Headteacher	Mrs M Carter
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Whiteways Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S4 8EX
Telephone number	0114 2423169
Fax number	0114 2617846

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average inner city school that draws pupils from an area of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. Nine out of ten pupils have ethnic heritages other than White British, largely Pakistani and Yemeni. Most speak a language other than English at home: more than 25 different languages are spoken in school. A larger than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although fewer pupils than average have a statement of special educational need. Large numbers of pupils join and leave the school during the year. Many of these speak little or no English and have varying amounts of prior schooling. The school has Investors in People and Healthy Schools' status as well as a Basic Skills Quality Mark. Some of the support staff are funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Whiteways Junior is a satisfactory and improving school. It has some good aspects to its work, in particular, the first class pastoral care it offers pupils that helps them to settle quickly and to make the most of their time in school. For many pupils who arrive in school from other countries with little or no knowledge of English, this is even more important as it helps them to establish effective learning without delay. Parents typically comment that they have, 'Nothing but praise for the school.' An increasing number are participating in workshops aimed at helping parents to support their children's learning and they value these highly. Within an overall satisfactory picture of leadership and management, the improving achievement, rising standards and rigorous tracking of pupils' attainment and progress, demonstrates the school has a good capacity to improve further. It offers sound value for money. The school has an accurate view of itself and knows that work remains to be done. The school's improvement since its last inspection reflects the determination of the headteacher and assistant headteachers to move the school forwards. Following a period of disruption this year at senior leadership level, teamwork and leadership skills have now improved. Senior leaders are using their complementary skills well to good effect. In particular, the data the school now collects provide a far more accurate picture of what pupils can do because teachers are more confident that they are assessing pupils' work correctly. As a result teachers are beginning to plan lessons that suit pupils' individual needs in order to move their learning on.

Standards in Year 3 when pupils arrive in school are below average. Standards in English, mathematics and science, although below average by the end of Year 6, are rising. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There are stronger pockets of good and better teaching to be found throughout the school but teaching is not yet of a consistently high enough quality. The marking of pupils' work offers praise but teachers do not offer sufficient guidance to pupils on how to do better. The curriculum is satisfactory in promoting pupils' academic progress and offers many opportunities for pupils to improve elements of their personal and social development. The school is using an effective range of strategies which are leading to pupils' good personal development. Pupils are happy at school. They behave well because that is what adults consistently expect of them. Pupils learn much about what it means to live healthy and safe lifestyles. Increasingly strong partnerships with outside agencies add variety to pupils' learning and also benefit pupils in terms of the good care, guidance and support they enjoy. For example, participation in the Arches sports partnership brings many benefits in terms of pupils' physical fitness. Increasingly sophisticated assessment procedures mean that staff now have a clearer understanding of what pupils need to do next to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Ensure that teachers plan work that sufficiently challenges pupils of all abilities to improve their pace of learning.
- Make sure teachers' marking provides consistently clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils join the school with below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Many are learning to speak English as an additional language and have very diverse experiences of schooling before they arrive. Each year significant numbers of pupils join or leave the school outside the usual times. Not only is this disruptive in terms of pupils' education but, frequently, no comparative data are available against which to measure their progress. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by Year 6. Nevertheless, standards are still below average, although rising, in English, mathematics and science. The most recent results for the current Year 6 indicate that progress is picking up. In particular, standards in English show an improvement as a result of the key literacy focus during the year. The school already plans to increase the focus on numeracy next year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those starting to learn English benefit from timely support programmes so they make similar progress to other groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and say, 'learning is fun'. They speak of their school with loyalty. They know adults want them to succeed and encourage them to, 'dream it, believe it, achieve it'. Such positive experiences result in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The active school council gives pupils a clear voice and they use this with confidence. For instance, they asked for an outdoor clock and this is now in place. They also help to interview candidates for new school posts. Racial harmony is reflected in the school's motto, 'We all smile in the same language.' Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills through charity work and plan how to spend their 'tiger tokens', rewards for hard work and good behaviour. These activities help to prepare pupils soundly for future life. Many pupils take extended absences to visit family abroad and for observance of religious festivals. The school does all it can to promote regular attendance. As a result of this, attendance rates, whilst below average, are starting to improve.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Within an overall picture of satisfactory teaching and learning, strengths are evident. Adults' expectations of how pupils will behave are consistently high and, as a result, lessons are framed within a light-hearted yet focused atmosphere. Strong supportive relationships ensure pupils are keen to learn. Teachers and skilful teaching assistants generally plan relevant work and appropriate support, particularly for lower attainers and for pupils just learning to speak English. This is because accurate assessments now point teachers more clearly to what these pupils need to do next. Even so, lessons are not of a consistently high enough quality. Work for higher attainers does not always offer enough challenge and this slows their learning and limits the progress they make. Colourful classrooms and corridors do not showcase enough pupils' work.

Nor do they display literacy and numeracy tips clearly enough to assist pupils when they are working independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The broad curriculum supports pupils' satisfactory achievement. Visits and visitors extend pupils' social skills and their knowledge of the wider world. Currently, there are no opportunities for residential experiences. Pupils particularly value 'theme days' and say that these help them to get more involved in their work and have fun. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education leads to pupils' good personal development within a secure and caring environment. The school's emphasis on personal and social programmes encourages pupils to reflect on what they learn and to become increasingly mature and responsible members of society. The school is planning a more creative curriculum with closer links beginning to develop between subjects. After-school clubs are popular with pupils as, for instance, they improve their table tennis skills under the supervision of specialist adult tuition.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the care the school offers their children and say that the school 'strives to improve'. They also praise the varied programme of parent workshops that help families to understand how children learn and what they can do to help. Pupils say they feel safe and that, 'our teachers are kind and help us'. The support given to pupils who join the school with little or no English is particularly effective as it helps them to settle quickly and to make good gains in their learning. Pupils take care of one another and show increasing regard for their peers' emotional as well as physical well-being. Skilful teaching assistants and mentors provide carefully planned support programmes and together with good links with numerous outside agencies support pupils' learning well. Procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure the health, safety and well-being of everyone in school are in place. Academic guidance is increasingly effective as teachers' knowledge of each pupil's achievements is rooted in close analysis of data. Nevertheless, the guidance pupils receive from teachers' marking on how to improve their work is not clear enough. Although it provides regular praise, it does not exemplify how to improve and help them make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders now have a sharper focus on ensuring that pupils' academic and personal guidance take equal priority. This has not always been the case. Although first class pastoral support has long been part of the school's nurturing ethos, this now sits hand in hand with rigorous interrogation of assessment information. This is helping to move the school forward at a faster rate in its efforts to raise standards. The leadership knows that academic standards and pupils' achievement must continue to improve and that these new systems need time to show maximum impact. Strong partnerships with other schools ensure pupils benefit from well planned transfer programmes. The school is firmly at the heart of the community. For example, the response to a neighbouring school devastated by fire was exemplary. Space was rapidly cleared in school so that those Year 6 pupils and staff, affected by the fire, could share Whiteways' building for several weeks and continue their test preparations without disruption. The governing body is

supportive, although several governor posts are currently vacant. Governors' involvement in challenging the school's academic performance is improving as they become more knowledgeable. Efficient lunchtime, administrative and ancillary staff assure the school's smooth running.

Annex A

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 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

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	3

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	3
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?	2

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.

Annex A

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Whiteways Junior School, Sheffield, S4 8EX

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed listening to you and seeing all the good things that go on in your school.

Your school is a satisfactory school which is improving well. You and your parents told us how well it looks after you and we saw that ourselves. The way breakfast club helps so many of you to get off to a fine start to the day was good to see. We saw the way lunchtime and breaktimes run and the meals were smashing. There is a very happy and supportive atmosphere in your school. This is partly because you all get on so well together and look after each other too, so keep that up!

All the good care and support you receive from the adults in school help you to become more thoughtful and responsible young people. You are trustworthy and try your very best in lessons. These are all important skills now and for when you are older. We saw that you work hard and ask for help in lessons. Although you make satisfactory progress, there is still more to do to bring English, mathematics and science to the standard required by the time you leave Year 6. We have asked your teachers to make lessons even more challenging to help with this. You are all used to your teachers writing comments in your books when you have finished a piece of work. Often this is praise for a job well done. However, we would like your teachers to write down clearly how you can improve each piece of work as well. So, don't forget to read carefully what they write and follow the advice in your next piece of work.

We think you will all be very keen to help your headteacher, staff and governors to make your school even better. Some of your parents are doing their bit by coming into school to hear you read and attending workshops. It would be marvellous if you could persuade even more of them to do this as it helps you all with your learning.