



White Laith Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107932
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287962
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Hartley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Naburn Drive
School category	Community		Leeds
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire LS14 2BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2930280
Number on roll (school)	182	Fax number	0113 2946800
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr S Green
		Headteacher	Mrs Sheerin
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 October 2006	287962

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

White Laith Primary School is situated in Whinmoor on the northern outskirts of the City of Leeds. Eighteen percent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is broadly in line with the national figure. Three percent of pupils do not have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is eighteen percent, which represents a steady increase since the October 2004 inspection when it was only eleven percent. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

The school was inspected in June 2003 when it was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. With new leadership, the school made rapid progress and was removed from special measures in October 2004. The headteacher was subsequently seconded to work for the local authority with whom he is now permanently employed. Since Easter 2006, the deputy headteacher has become the acting headteacher.

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 now a good school which is well placed to make even greater gains under the very effective leadership of the acting headteacher. It has made rapid strides in all the key areas of its work and is demonstrating a very clear capacity to sustain and continue its improvement. The acting headteacher and previous headteacher together set out a detailed plan to: raise standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT); revitalise the curriculum; improve the way pupils' progress was measured; and revise the quality of teaching. Although some of the actions, such as the monitoring of pupils' progress, are in the early stages of being implemented, others are already having a positive impact, especially in helping teachers plan work, raising morale, and enlivening and enriching the pupils' experiences.

Standards throughout all the key stages have risen and are now at their best levels for four years and are generally at or very near national levels. The most effective progress has been made in English, mathematics, science and ICT, which have been the focus of the staff's attention. However, it has not always been so; one of the reasons the school was placed in special measures was its poor standards, caused mainly by a cocktail of indifferent teaching, weak assessment procedures and a curriculum that lacked appropriate challenge. All of that has changed rapidly and it would be difficult now to spot the traces of special measures. However, standards in the foundation subjects are less buoyant. To address this, there is a major initiative to overhaul the curriculum using a variety of topics and themes, which make imaginative use of local resources and some further afield, which is beginning to bear fruit.

Staff changes have enabled the acting headteacher to reorganise the responsibilities of the staff team. It makes a major contribution to the school's effectiveness and each staff member knows and discharges their responsibilities efficiently. They understand how their contribution fits into the broader picture, and they work in unison with others. The link between consistency and effectiveness is amply demonstrated at White Laith.

The current acting headteacher can take much credit for the present 'upbeat' state of affairs. She is clear in her vision for the school, but is firmly rooted in all the managerial and practical elements which are enabling everyone to make their mark. She is very ably supported by the governing body, and in particular the chair of governors, who discharges his responsibilities with great energy and skill.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the foundation subjects.
- Establish more fully the monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Develop the pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and understanding that are generally below average. Nevertheless, the school's detailed analysis of what the children can and cannot do provide an accurate springboard from which to plan exciting and stimulating work. The staff are skilled at developing the children's listening and speaking skills and broadening their experiences and they begin to make rapid progress. The creation of a Foundation Stage Unit, which includes the Reception age children, allows this 'flying start' to be built upon so that, by the time they reach the beginning of Key Stage 1, most of the children have met the early learning goals, and assessments show that they are in line with other children nationally. Pupils continue to make progress throughout both key stages and results in national tests show that most pupils, at both key stages, are at, or very near, national levels. Much effort has been put into improving standards in English, mathematics and science. An analysis of the latest 2006 test results shows that there have been improvements in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 to levels which are the highest for four years, while at the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English are 25% better than 2005, and in mathematics they are 15% better than in 2005.

Encouragingly, standards in the lessons seen were satisfactory overall, with some pupils achieving good levels, especially in those subjects which have been a priority for development within the school.

Nearly all pupils are achieving well and progress in learning is good. There is vibrant teaching, a curriculum which is well suited to the pupils and work which nearly always matches their current learning needs. During the inspection there were no examples of pupils' underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' views are heard and acted upon through a lively school council. They speak with excitement about getting new basketball nets for the playground and are keen to take responsibility for many aspects of school life. At lunchtime, play leaders from Year 6 organise equipment, manage rotas independently and also support younger pupils. As a result of pupils being listened to, there is now an indoor play option during the winter months. Pupils behave very well, have positive attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy their lessons.

Assemblies and lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on and learn about spiritual, moral and social issues, although provision for cultural diversity is less prominent. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance and, despite a slight dip in 2006, due primarily to unusual rates of illness, strategies are in place to sustain this improvement. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through their work towards the national Healthy Schools Standard and there is also the opportunity to take part in a wealth of after-school sports and

activity clubs. Good skills in ICT and rising standards in literacy and numeracy prepare pupils well for the future. 'Inspirational Visitors' share experience of their working lives, which encourage pupils to think and discuss future choices.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall with some which is outstanding. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well planned and the purposes of the learning are carefully explained to the pupils. Teaching is at its best in English and mathematics, reflecting the hard work invested in those subjects by the whole school, and at least satisfactory in other subjects. Lessons contain lots of variety both in the different teaching styles chosen and in the appeal of activities. As a consequence, the pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well, even from the earliest age. Particular strengths include the use of electronic whiteboards; 'talking partners', when pupils discuss together a problem presented by the teacher; asking questions to check on the pupils' understanding, or to challenge them to further effort and keep them 'on their toes'. The work is almost always well-matched to the pupils' learning needs, especially for the least able pupils, and the pace of learning is brisk. A particular feature is the teachers' enthusiasm for their work.

A comprehensive system of analysing data from school and national assessments is in place which enables teachers to set pupil targets for the end of the year, plan work accurately and thereby influence progress in learning and standards. Important developments will be for the staff to check regularly on progress towards the targets and to involve pupils more fully in setting and reviewing subject targets.

The teaching assistants are a valuable asset to the school and enhance the quality of work. They know the pupils well and are well-briefed about their role in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and meets statutory requirements. It matches the needs of individual pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and increasingly so in other aspects of learning. The school has recently agreed on seven curriculum aims to enrich and enliven the curriculum. They include using skills taught in one subject to promote learning in another: for example, communication skills in literacy to help pupils explain and record findings in science or history; promoting learning skills; and developing motivation and enjoyment through exciting practical tasks.

All of these principles have been incorporated in curriculum plans which have been drawn up using the expertise and enthusiasm of the staff team, under the guidance of an overall curriculum leader. The school has recognised the benefits of drawing on community resources to enhance learning: for example, developing a partnership with

a ballet company to enrich work on poetry; inviting local people to share their experiences; and by making visits to places of interest. A particularly innovative feature is the introduction of 'Inspirational Visitors': a programme designed to introduce pupils to the world of work and provide opportunities to apply skills. Following a visit from a stockbroker, pupils are charting the financial fortunes of shares on the stock market. There is an extensive range of well supported out-of-school sports and cultural clubs. The impact of all these curriculum measures is beginning to bear fruit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good, successfully promoting their physical health and emotional well-being. Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for health and safety are robust. Pupils are confident and clearly enjoy their learning, which takes place in a safe, pleasant learning environment. The school has worked hard to involve parents and carers, who overwhelmingly agree that pupils are well cared for and safe. One parent, for example, said, 'My daughter and our family are very proud to say we attend White Laith. It's a wonderful school.' An increasing number of parents and carers take part in courses and activities in school, which support them in helping with their children's learning. Pupils say there is always someone to go to if they have a problem and are confident that they will get help and guidance. Close working relationships with a range of agencies provide pupils with the support they need to overcome their barriers to learning. This is particularly successful for the most vulnerable pupils, who progress well. Support for pupils through target-setting and marking is developing well and an increasing number of pupils are able to say what they need to do to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed and the acting headteacher is providing very effective leadership and astute management skills. These have combined to enable all staff to give of their best resulting in the pupils receiving a challenging and rewarding educational experience. The present acting headteacher was part of the senior management team that began the school's regeneration and is now confidently and successfully making her mark on its continued improvement. There is a very positive and 'upbeat' feel to the school, established since special measures were removed, which has created an effective climate in which standards are rising, achievement and progress is much improved and curriculum innovation is well underway.

All staff with responsibilities know their roles and how their contribution fits into the big picture. There is a good degree of consistency in how they work: for example, subject leaders draw up an action plan based on the strengths and weaknesses in their subject, help teachers implement new ideas and monitor how much progress is made. New initiatives to create an exciting and challenging curriculum have been skilfully delegated and curriculum teams consider the practical implications.

All of these current initiatives are contained in a school improvement plan of good quality. It sets out a clear vision for the future, what needs to be done, how it will happen and the signs of success.

A major strength is the acting headteacher's aim of promoting the pupils' personal well-being through knowing their social and learning needs and providing a curriculum in which each pupil fulfils their potential. The school is achieving a good deal of success: the staff are enthusiastic, respond well to challenges and display good teamwork.

The school is kept firmly on track by the insightful and forward-thinking chair of governors. He discharges his responsibilities with great energy and displays a deep concern for the rights of each individual child. Under his astute leadership, the governors take an active part in decision-making and measuring the school's success.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	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	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 would like to say how much Mrs Talboys, Mrs Hicks and I enjoyed spending time in your school. Thank you for being so polite and friendly and telling us about your work and what interests you.

We spent a lot of time finding out how well you are learning and by watching you work in some of the lessons and talking to Mrs Sheerin and your teachers. Don't they do well! Showing you how to do things and making sure you have lots of exciting things to do. At the end of the inspection we talked to Mrs Sheerin about what we had found out. This is what we said.

We thought you were extremely well behaved children, listened carefully to your teachers, did as you were asked, and worked hard in your lessons. Even the youngest children were good at taking turns and sharing things. The older children acted responsibly, taking care of books and equipment. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school and that the adults took good care of you. You certainly seem to enjoy your work and we are pleased that you want to do well.

One of the jobs we have to do when we inspect schools like yours is to see if there are any things which could make your school even better. Of course, we couldn't think of anything you could do because you're brilliant already!

It was hard, but we did ask Mrs Sheerin and your teachers to see if there were any ways which they could help you do even better in your foundation subjects - your teachers will explain that to you - and to find ways of checking regularly to make sure you are working as hard as you possibly can.

So, keep working hard, doing your best and enjoying your school. Remember, if I ever come to White Laith again, I'll want to know how you are getting on!