



Whipperley Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109559
Local Authority LUTON
Inspection number 288425
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jackie Cousins

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Whipperley Ring
School category	Community		Luton
Age range of pupils	4–7		Bedfordshire LU1 5QY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 725868
Number on roll (school)	175	Fax number	01582 402346
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Harwin
		Headteacher	Mrs L Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007	Inspection number 288425
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A significant proportion of pupils start at school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are significantly below expectations and the overall attainment on entry is well below average. A considerable proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Above expected levels of pupils join the school part way through the academic year. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is considerably above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school is part of the programme to develop Excellence in Cities and a School Sports Partnership has been formed with a local secondary school. It is also part of the local Primary Learning Network.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whipperley Infants is an effective school and gives good value for money. The key to the school's success is effective leadership and management. Very good leadership from the headteacher, deputy headteacher and an effective senior management team ensure that pupils from all backgrounds are welcomed and integrated into school life incredibly well. An excellent partnership has been established with parents, local people and agencies. The school works extremely well to develop a sense of community. Pupils of many different backgrounds play together effectively and racial incidents are very rare.

The school's leadership gives high priority to pupils' personal development and so it is good, mostly because of the very effective care, guidance and support staff offer pupils. One parent wrote, 'Whipperley Infants School is a very warm and friendly school, my daughter is happy at school and enjoys going to school.' Pupils' behaviour is good. The staff work effectively to develop pupils' confidence. This means that pupils' self-esteem is high. The pupils interviewed talked enthusiastically about enjoying school. One pupil said, 'I like learning to add big numbers.'

The headteacher and senior staff are particularly committed to ensuring that pupils make good progress in learning to read and write and in mathematics, so pupils' achievement is really good. A significant proportion of pupils start school with well below average levels of knowledge and understanding. Progress is good during the Reception year as a result of effectively planned learning activities. However, pupils do not reach average levels until later in their school lives. Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1 and so standards are average by Year 2. Boys' standards of reading and writing are slightly below average. More able pupils have satisfactory provision. The curriculum is good. Pupils who have learning difficulties and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language are supported effectively and so they make good progress.

The school's leadership is dedicated to improving the quality of teaching and the development of teachers' skills. So teaching and learning are good. This is mostly because teachers have high expectations of pupils and use effective teaching methods. This means that pupils often learn through stimulating practical activities. Assessment is satisfactory but marking and feedback does not consistently tell pupils what they have done well and could do to improve.

There has been effective development since the last inspection because of a determination by staff to improve the quality of education and opportunities for pupils. Attendance is now good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly, especially for girls. The work of subject leaders has also been improved, but some are not always checking effectively on pupils' standards, progress and learning. As a result of these and other improvements the school shows it has a good capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards boys attain in reading and writing.
- Develop teachers' marking and feedback to pupils so that they know what they are successful in and could do to make their work better.
- Improve the role of subject leaders' to ensure that they effectively evaluate standards and pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is particularly good. This is really impressive when you take into account the fact that the school takes in a significant number of pupils part way through the academic year and some years have a third of pupils who have learning difficulties. Many pupils start at school with levels of knowledge that are well below average. Although standards are below average by the start of Year 1, pupils have made good progress. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language achieve well due to the effective support they receive.

Pupils' progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and so standards are average by the start of Year 3. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Challenging targets were met in 2006. Over the last four years the school has maintained consistently average standards. Pupils who find learning difficult have effective support and so they make good progress. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education because of their literacy, numeracy and science skills. The proportion of boys that attain average and above average standards in reading and writing assessments is slightly below the level expected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They have many opportunities to reflect on a variety of issues, for example, in assemblies and in lessons. They learn effectively about a range of cultures through lessons and visits to places of worship in their immediate neighbourhood. At playtimes and lunchtime, they play well together showing an increasing understanding of right from wrong and a sense of fair play. As pupils move up through the school they show increased maturity, building upon lessons learnt in how to live alongside others and care for their world. More could be done to clarify with pupils how they can improve their own work, by for example, more regular oral feedback by teachers.

Pupils know effectively how to keep themselves safe in school and when crossing the road. Their adoption of healthy lifestyles is good and this is partly because the senior staff place such an emphasis on healthy eating and exercise. All pupils enjoy at least two hours of taught physical exercise a week and eat fruit or vegetables every day. Attendance is now good. This is a clear indication of the successful impact of the

school's work, particularly its links with parents and the pupils' enjoyment at coming to school. Pupils make good contributions to their community. For example, they raise funds for various appeals and charities and go out and sing to elderly people in the area every term.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers challenge pupils well in lessons. Sessions are organised effectively so that pupils attain sound levels of expertise in literacy, numeracy and science. Good lesson planning ensures that time is used well. Questioning is used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of key vocabulary and language skills. The teaching of pupils who find learning harder is well matched to their needs. Teaching assistants are used effectively to create small teaching groups which cater for all pupils well including those who are from minority ethnic groups. In one outstanding lesson, the teachers' enthusiasm motivated pupils exceptionally well. Excellent teacher expertise enabled pupils to make outstanding progress, for example, when they made their own films using small cameras. Occasionally, teachers' marking does not always inform pupils what they have done well and could do to make their work even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Learning activities are planned well. The school's leadership places great emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and science which means that pupils make good progress. Visits and visitors enrich school life well. Effective links are made between subjects so that pupils learn to connect their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils' ICT skills are used well when they create riddles on cards using different colours and styles of text. Different subjects have a good balance of time given to them throughout the school year. High quality and stimulating displays around the school effectively celebrate pupils' work. A good curriculum is in place for pupils in the reception classes. Inside and outside activities are planned effectively and linked well together. Activities are adapted well for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language but on occasions clear programmes of study are not recorded in a simple way for these pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

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Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and manage the school well. A major strength is the way that the school has developed links with parents, carers, and other agencies. The senior management team use self-evaluation well and accurately which leads to the recognition of appropriate areas for improvement. Planning for improvement is effective. The school has moved quickly to provide effective support for the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The leadership of the school knows that some subject leaders are not yet operating fully effectively. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body offers the school a good level of support and challenge. However, although governors play an active role in the life of the school they have yet to develop a long-term view for the future of the school.

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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?	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	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?	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	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?	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	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	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	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

28 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Whipperley Infant School, Whipperley Ring, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 5QY

Thank you for helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and a governor. You are lucky to attend such a good school. Effective things about your school include the fact that:

- you make good progress in your work.
- your behaviour is good.
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher have very effective ideas about ways to improve the school.
- your headteacher and teachers have made an excellent partnership with parents and local people.
- teaching is good and teachers work hard to make lessons fun and challenging.
- teachers and staff care for you very well.
- the school council is working effectively to improve things for all of you.

We have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are:

- improving the skills of Year 2 boys in reading and writing.
- making sure you know what you have done well and could do to improve your work.
- developing the ways teachers watch and evaluate standards and your progress in some subjects.

Keep working hard and enjoying the many good things you do at Whipperley Infant School.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector