



Whittlefield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119262
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291367
Inspection date 22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Tabor Street
School category	Community		Burnley, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	3-11		BB12 0HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01282 429419
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	01282 459356
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Nicola Banks
		Headteacher	Mrs Julie Caygill
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Whittlefield Primary School is an average-sized school just outside Burnley. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are predominantly from White British families. Movement within the pupil population is broadly average, although it varies from year to year. The school has an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. When children start school, they have below average level of skills and knowledge especially in relation to language and communication skills.

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 a good school. Parents think highly of the school and feel it provides their children with a good education. Reflecting the view of many, one parent said, 'Whittlefield School is a lovely school. The teachers and staff are all very friendly and approachable.' The level of care the school provides and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils like coming to school and most attend regularly. Teachers plan good learning experiences. For example, pupils have met the town's mayor to develop their understanding of citizenship. A good range of extra curricular activities is enjoyed by a large number of pupils. Good improvements have been made to the school buildings and to the outside play area for young children, which enhance the quality of the learning environment.

Behaviour is good and pupils make many friends. Responding well to the school's lead, pupils are keen to keep fit and understand why they should eat healthy food. They take their responsibilities in school seriously, especially school council members who are proud of the fact that they have a say in 'their' school. They make a good contribution to the wider community through charitable fundraising and are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Pupils achieve well, mainly because of good teaching and the work of skilled support staff. Teachers know their pupils well and good lesson planning based on accurate assessment helps pupils make good progress. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because of the strong focus on promoting personal development and the good range of challenging activities. They reach the learning goals expected in all areas of learning, except in communication and language, by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress so that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. The most recent test results were broadly average but not as high as in previous years because of the above average number of pupils with learning difficulties some of whom only joined the school in Year 5. In addition, not enough of the most able pupils had the writing skills to reach the higher level in English. Pupils generally are not given sufficient opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong, determined leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. They know their school well, have a clear vision for its future and ensure a good balance between promoting pupils' personal and academic development. The school rightly acknowledges that subject leadership is still developing and has a planned programme to provide subject leaders with a clearer overview of their subjects in order to raise standards further. Governors are well informed and carry out their duties well. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Provide more opportunities for pupils, especially more able pupils, to use and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Ensure subject leaders have a good overview of their curriculum areas to improve standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards by Year

6. From a below average starting point, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. By the end of Reception, the majority reach the learning goals set for them, except in communication, language and literacy, which are lower than other aspects when children start school.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics although few pupils reach the higher levels in writing. Results in the most recent national tests in Year 6 were not as high as in previous years reflecting the higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties in the age group with some only joining the school in Year 5. As with younger pupils, not enough pupils reached the higher levels in writing.

The school's accurate assessment information supported by inspection evidence shows that the attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 class is above expectations in English, mathematics and science. There are no major gender differences. The school met its targets for the national tests in 2006 and inspection evidence demonstrates that it is on course to meet this year's demanding targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are considerate towards one another and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. One pupil commented, 'If you are worried about something, there is always someone to talk to in this school.' Pupils enjoy school and when they talk about their work, they are keen to describe what parts of lessons they like. For example, older pupils were keen to talk about the good fairground ride designs they had completed and how much they enjoy the 'Events' week held each term. They appreciate and value what is provided for them after school. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils know how to keep healthy and take regular exercise. Pupils understand the need for balanced diets. They willingly take on responsibilities; for instance, older pupils support younger children in the playground. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual, moral and social developments are strengths and contribute to the good relationships pupils have with each other and with members of staff. Cultural development is satisfactory but, when pupils speak of cultural differences and similarities, their knowledge is restricted to matters relating to different

faiths and not how beliefs affect the way people live. Pupils receive good preparation for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' good relationships with their pupils ensure that they feel confident to offer their ideas. Lessons are well planned and time is used well, so there is a good pace to learning. Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and provide interesting and challenging activities so that pupils are well motivated and clear about what they have to learn. Good use is made of teachers' skills in Years 5 and 6 with one teacher teaching English to both classes while the other one teaches mathematics. This system works well.

A weakness in teaching is the missed opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills consistently well in all subjects. Good improvements have been made in the Foundation Stage to the quality and breadth of children's learning experiences, a weakness highlighted in the previous inspection. As a result, children experience a wide range of valuable and worthwhile learning opportunities both in the classroom and in the outside area and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is a strong feature of the curriculum. As a result, pupils enjoy school and know their ideas will be listened to. The good range of after-school clubs are much enjoyed by pupils. Financial limitations mean that the school does not undertake many trips out of school. However, when outside visits are made, such as the recent visit to a Shakespearean play, every opportunity is provided for pupils to get the maximum benefit from the experience. 'Events weeks', held each term, play a valuable part in the curriculum and help to ensure that pupils come into contact with writers, poets and theatre groups.

The school provides well for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, the targets set to help them improve are occasionally not precise enough. The school has rightly identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum, especially for higher attaining pupils. Good links with the community include pupils being able to question the town's mayor about his duties. Links with the high school ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. Provision for pupils' safeguarding and personal welfare is good; child protection procedures are firmly in place and are reviewed regularly. Pupils are given good support personally and this helps them to feel safe and secure in school. The small proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is catered for well. The school's caring ethos means that pupils feel valued. Staff know the pupils well and the friendly atmosphere helps them to settle quickly to their learning. Pupils speak warmly of the support they get from all staff. Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress and the information is used well by most teachers in ensuring that pupils make the progress they should.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and receives very good support from the deputy headteacher. Despite unavoidable staff absences and the inevitable disruption of a major building programme, she has ensured that pupils continue to receive a good quality of education. Parents and pupils are consulted on a regular basis about their views. Through a good monitoring programme, the headteacher has a clear picture of where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie and of the necessary improvements. This is reflected in the school improvement plan, which charts the way forward well for the current academic year. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in evaluating their subject areas but do not all have a good overview of what needs to be done to improve standards further. Governors know the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Overall effectiveness of the school is good and good improvements have been made since the previous inspection, especially in relation to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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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?	2
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	2
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	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	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	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

Whittlefield Primary School

Tabor Street

Burnley

Lancashire

BB12 0HL

24 February 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for helping me during the inspection. You will not be surprised to know that I think your school is good. I enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was a pleasure to meet Year 6 pupils some of whom kindly gave up their lunch-time to answer questions. I was really pleased to see the good quality PowerPoint work being done in your ICT suite as a follow-up to the mayor's visit. The list below shows some of the many things I liked about your school.

- You work hard and achieve well throughout the school.
- You behave well, are keen to offer your opinions and also to listen to the views of others.
- You like your teachers and other members of staff, and the way they make learning interesting.
- You enjoy the visits you make to different places and the many clubs after school.

We have asked your school to look at a two things to make your work even better.

- To provide you with more challenging opportunities to use your writing skills in subjects such as history and geography.
- To make sure that teachers who have special responsibilities for subjects know how well you are developing your skills across all age groups.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector