

# Whaplode C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 120555            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | LINCOLNSHIRE LA   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 291779            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 8–9 November 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Norma Ball        |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary controlled  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 186   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Ann Willingham  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Mary Grist  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 7 May 2002  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Mill Lane<br>Whaplode<br>Spalding<br>Lincolnshire<br>PE12 6TS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01406 370447  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01406 370447  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school, which serves the village of Whaplode, and the surrounding rural community. The majority of pupils are White British and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The proportion identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Whaplode provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view of its own effectiveness. Parents appreciate the very caring approach the school adopts with all pupils. One parent wrote, 'I feel my children get the best care and help the school can offer'. Children are happy and settle quickly to their learning tasks.

As a result of effective pastoral care, pupils develop well socially and morally and their spiritual development and cultural awareness are satisfactory. They know the importance of staying safe and healthy and respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. Academic guidance is not yet strong but the school is tackling this as a matter of priority. The pupils have a range of responsibilities in school and are enthusiastically involved in their local community. Through good care and satisfactory academic progress, pupils are prepared adequately for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They enter school with skills, which are similar to those found nationally and make satisfactory progress through all stages of their primary education. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Most pupils reach the levels they should in reading and writing, mathematics and science. In 2007, test results were broadly average but lower than those for 2006. The dip in standards was most marked in science where there had been a steady decline over the previous three years. Nevertheless, given their starting points, these pupils again made satisfactory progress.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Subjects are increasingly well linked to make lessons interesting and information and communication technology (ICT) makes a good contribution to learning. Good teaching is not yet shared and used to help improve pockets of weakness. Assessment of pupils' progress is developing but is not consistently applied, so teachers do not always plan work to give appropriate challenge to pupils of different abilities. In marking, teachers are not always identifying carefully how pupils can improve their work and so make better progress. A strength of teaching is the good relationships in classes, which contributes to pupils enjoyment of their learning.

The headteacher and deputy work as a close partnership and their complementary skills are providing increasingly clear direction for the school. Middle managers are developing their roles and responsibilities but as yet they do not all show the same drive to promote and develop their subjects so that learning is improved and pupils attain higher standards. Governors are very supportive of the school but do not hold the leadership to account with sufficient zeal. The school is not complacent and has set suitably challenging targets to move the school forwards. It has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Most children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment broadly similar to those expected for their age. The vast majority make satisfactory progress and attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 because teaching is satisfactory. Pastoral care on the other hand is good. Children settle quickly into school, interact well with the class teacher and gain in confidence. Satisfactory emphasis is placed on developing their social skills and encouraging them to talk. There are reasonable opportunities for them to initiate and develop their own ideas and undertake creative activities and their personal development is satisfactory. However,

insufficient progress has been made in improving the outdoor learning area, although plans are in place to improve this provision. Limited outdoor play hinders the development of children's physical skills and their ability to play together.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by challenging pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able.
- Improve the consistency and quality of all aspects of assessment, including marking, so that work is more closely matched to pupils' needs and they always receive clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that leadership and management at all levels focus sharply on bringing about the rapid improvements required in English, mathematics and science.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The vast majority of pupils achieve satisfactory standards during their time in the school. Inspection evidence indicates that a satisfactory foundation is laid in the Reception class. Pupils join Year 1 with broadly average standards. By the end of Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress attaining standards in line with those reached by pupils of similar age. As a result, at Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Most pupils reach the levels they should in reading and writing, mathematics and science. The school is focusing with increasing care on improving reading and writing skills and the success of this is beginning to be apparent in the gradually improving results in writing throughout the school. The same attention is being given to raising standards in science by improving the use of scientific vocabulary and pupils' investigation skills. The school's data show that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language receive good support and make at least satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. However, their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is less well developed. Pupils' social skills are developing well and their contribution to the community is good. They want to take responsibilities by being a member of the school council or a 'playground buddy'. Some pupils spoke enthusiastically about raising funds for charity and their links with the local church. Pupils like the reward system for attendance and they are increasingly enjoying school. Their attendance is satisfactory. Several pupils said they enjoyed the 'theme weeks', particularly the one on healthy living. As a result, pupils are gaining a good understanding of healthy living. Good relationships at every level are a feature of the school. Pupils play well together and are mostly attentive in class. The broadly average standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Most pupils work sensibly either alone or in groups. They especially enjoy the new approach to paired work in lessons. Pupils concentrate well, especially when they are fully involved in interesting tasks but can become distracted if activities do not challenge or excite them. In most lessons, teaching is carefully planned based on the increasing use of assessment information. The purpose of lessons is invariably explained and activities are mostly structured for different ability groups. However, the work planned is not always sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able pupils. The quality of marking varies between classes and between different subjects. Marking is used to best effect in English but is still not always effective in helping guide pupils in how to produce better work. Teaching support staff are well managed and provide a range of well-structured support for pupils in and out of class so they too make satisfactory progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Satisfactory emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is increasingly being matched to meet the needs of individual pupils. As a result, standards, especially in writing, are improving and there is a clear understanding of how higher standards can be promoted in science. Appropriate links are being made between subjects and ICT is being used creatively to support learning. This ensures that pupils gain more from their lessons and enjoy learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 were very excited by a project on toys, which linked history, literacy and ICT. The curriculum is enhanced by an adequate range of extra curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school provides a caring and stable place for pupils. Their well-being and safety are given a high priority and appropriate procedures are in place. The school fully meets the latest requirements for the safeguarding of pupils. A helpful range of valuable links has been forged with outside agencies to support the care provided by the school. Pupils feel their views are listened to and one pupil said, 'There is always someone you can turn to if you have any worries'. Induction of new pupils, at whatever stage they enter the school, is sensitively organised and their needs are carefully met. The guidance given to pupils to help them improve their work and achieve as well as they can is inconsistent and lacks rigour. All classes have established group targets for literacy and numeracy, but they are not always used to maximum effect nor are they a regular focus for pupils in all lessons. In some classes, individual targets arising from marking are used with good effect and pupils say they find them helpful. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language receive good support in class and in small groups. Parents are closely involved with the school and are provided with good information about their children's development.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school is welcoming and inclusive and operates calmly on a day-to-day basis. The senior management team has a clear perspective on the future direction of the school, which is succinctly reflected in the good school improvement plan. It is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's performance and focuses effectively on raising standards. Subject co-ordinators have an adequate overview of the school's performance and are beginning to identify strategies to raise standards. This is being achieved through the introduction of a detailed system for assessment and more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school. They are supportive but do not challenge the school sufficiently by asking searching questions. However, they set suitably challenging statutory targets in English and mathematics. They have contributed to the school's self-evaluation and the creation of the school development plan. Given the recent improvements in the quality of provision, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement and provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Annex A

## 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? | 3   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?                                  | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 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**

10 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whaplode Church of England Primary School, Whaplode, Spalding, PE12 6TS

You may remember that I came with another inspector to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school. It was a very busy time for you all but it gave us a chance to see the school at work and play.

Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. This means there are good things about the school and some things that could be better. One of the best things about Whaplode Primary is the way adults look after and care for you. Most of you behave well. You told us how much you enjoy things like the theme weeks in which you have been involved. We also learnt that you like to help your school and some of you take responsibilities like being a school councillor or 'playground buddy'. You know how to stay safe and healthy and enjoy taking lots of exercise.

Your teachers make most of your lessons interesting and help you to enjoy your learning. We have asked them always to give you work that is not too easy or too hard. This will help you think more and do even better work. Adults do keep a regular check on your progress. We have asked them to carry out these checks more carefully so that they know how well you are doing and help you make more progress, especially in English, mathematics and science.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. I send you my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball Lead Inspector