



Whitefriars Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121909
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292257
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Timothy Bristow HMI

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

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Type of school | Infant | School address | Boughton Drive |
| School category | Community | | Rushden |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 | | NN10 9HX |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01933 359269 |
| Number on roll (school) | 173 | Fax number | 01933 400660 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Vacant Position |
| | | Headteacher | Deborah Stewart |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2002 | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4–7 | Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007 | Inspection number 292257 |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2007

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

Whitefriars Infant School is of average size. When pupils enter the school aged four, standards are broadly average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There have been recent significant changes in teaching staff.

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. The inspection findings confirm the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. This is due to the headteacher's good leadership in motivating staff and providing clear direction for improvements in provision. Teachers have responded to this by working closely together to improve their teaching, resulting in pupils making good progress over time. The quality of provision and the progress made by children in the Reception class is good. The school demonstrates good capacity for future improvement. The school has seen significant changes in teaching staff in the last month. In consequence, the quality of teaching, which was good, is now satisfactory. This is because assessment information is not being used consistently to plan pupils' work and to ensure that it is pitched at the correct level. This means that, although achievement and standards are good, the progress pupils make has slowed down. The school is a happy one. Clear guidelines and support systems for pastoral care mean that pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after. The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are considerate and caring towards each other. The good quality of the curriculum for personal, social and health education means that pupils are developing an awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They have good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community through their membership of the school council, involvement in charity fundraising and the concerts in which they perform. Pupils leave school well prepared for education in the junior school. Information about pupils' progress is used effectively to ensure that extra support is given when it is needed. However, this assessment information is not used well enough to guide pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. Good procedures for transition mean that pupils move from Reception to Year 1 and into junior school with the minimum interruption to their education. The school provides an enriching curriculum with a number of stimulating activities. Themed events, for example, the teddy bear hunt, all contribute to the pleasure pupils get from learning. Teachers have worked hard to establish a broad and balanced curriculum which is enabling all groups of pupils to develop interests and skills which will contribute to their future well-being. In some subjects, teachers devise activities that closely match what pupils are expected to learn. However, in other subjects, pupils use worksheets which are not matched to their ability.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils clear guidance about what they have to do to improve their work.
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently to plan for the needs of all learners in lessons.
- Ensure that, where worksheets are used, these are matched to pupils' abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children start school with the knowledge and skills typical of their age. They make good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the Year 2 test results in 2006, which were above average in writing, and in the high standards of pupils' current work. The number of more able pupils who reached the higher Level 3 in 2006 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Analysis of school and local authority data shows that pupils achieve standards well above average in science, and speaking and listening. This is because of the enriching curriculum and rigorous systems used to ensure pupils' progress. Targets set for pupils are challenging and, in 2006, almost all achieved them and a significant proportion exceeded them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of well planned support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assemblies, for example, pupils reflect calmly on moral issues and on the needs of others. Pupils work and play well together and are polite, friendly and considerate. Good relationships are a strong feature, and pupils are clearly happy in school, a view endorsed by many parents. Pupils report that bullying is not a problem, and any difficulties that do arise are quickly sorted out. They move round with care for their own and others' safety and are well supervised at all times. Attendance is satisfactory rather than good because some pupils are taken on holiday during term time. Pupils are demonstrating an understanding of a healthy lifestyle; they enjoy healthy snacks and regular 'Activate' exercise sessions. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. The 'playground friends' enjoy helping others at breaktimes. School councillors are proud of their role, and one said, 'We help make the school better.' Good standards in mathematics and English indicate that pupils are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Typically, lessons are well organised and make good use of a variety of resources. Pupils enjoy learning. They try hard and standards are high. At the start of each lesson, teachers make sure pupils know what they are going to learn. The recent changes in senior teaching staff have meant that assessment information is not now used consistently when planning lessons. This means that the work does not really challenge more able pupils and yet is too difficult for others. Consequently, pupils lose interest and their progress slows down. Teaching assistants provide skilled

and knowledgeable support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, so they progress well. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate and discuss tasks with each other and this helps them become increasingly confident learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school has thoughtfully designed a curriculum that is well balanced, effectively linking learning between different subjects. A flexible approach to the timetable has meant pupils are able to develop a deeper interest in their work, in some subjects demonstrating independence and perseverance. In others, an over reliance on worksheets by teachers means that the tasks pupils engage in are not pitched at the correct level, which hampers their progress. The school has been awarded the Activemark, which contributes to the healthy lifestyle pupils are developing. Specialist teaching in physical education, music and drama has raised the standards achieved by pupils in these subjects. The many activities provided, including the trip to Twycross Zoo, performing in the Wellingborough Dance Festival and a visit from the fire service, all contribute to the enrichment and enjoyment of pupils. Reception class children were thrilled when they watched tiny chicks hatch.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good provision for pupils' care, guidance and support ensures they achieve well. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and meet all current requirements. The school works well in partnership with all local health and support agencies in order to ensure that pupils' welfare and educational needs are met. Pupils feel secure, valued and cared for because of the good relationships they have with adults. The school supports pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well so that they make good progress. The teaching assistants are particularly effective, especially in small focused support groups. Good systems for tracking pupils' progress give staff a clear picture of how well their pupils are progressing. They provide valuable information to help direct extra support where most needed. However, pupils are not clear about how they can improve because this information is not shared with them in discussion or when marking their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since joining the school, the headteacher has given a very strong lead that is focused on raising standards and improving pupils' well-being. She supports staff well and, as a result, they work effectively together in pursuit of the school's aims. The school improvement plan contains clear priorities that are shared by all staff and governors. The quality of self-evaluation is good. Teaching and many aspects of school provision are checked regularly, providing a good focus for staff training. This has led to improvements in provision and the progress

made by pupils. However, at the time of the inspection, significant changes in teaching staff had led to a dip in the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and a good overview of the school that enables them to act as critical friends and to hold the school to account when necessary. The school has the overwhelming support of parents. Careful management of the school budget has led to many improvements, including enlargement of classrooms, which has enhanced the environment for learning.

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 | 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? | 3 |
| 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 | 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

- Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited you. We felt very welcome at Whitefriars Infant School. If you remember, we came to look at all the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were very friendly, well behaved and polite. We know that you work hard and do well in your lessons. We agree that you feel safe in school and that an adult will always step in to help you if needed. Your headteacher and the school governors have worked very hard to give you a good start to your education. Your teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you and provide exciting activities for you to take part in. We also think there are some things that the school could do better:
- Give you more advice about how you can improve your work.
- Make sure that your work is not too hard or too easy so that you can learn more quickly.
- Make sure that the worksheets that they give you really help you with your work. Please remember to come to school every day and listen to the advice teachers give you so that you do even better in your lessons.