



## Whixall CofE (Controlled) Primary School

### Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123516  
**Local Authority** Shropshire  
**Inspection number** 292694  
**Inspection date** 6 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Don Mason

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 address</b>	Whixall
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Whitchurch
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		SY13 2SB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01948 880330
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	139	<b>Fax number</b>	01948 880330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David Baldwin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Morris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The attainment of pupils on entry to school is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is a little above average overall. The deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in September 2006 pending the arrival of a new, permanent headteacher in January 2007.

## **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 which enables its pupils to achieve well. Children start school with below-average standards because many have significant weaknesses in language and mathematical skills. Children make good progress in the Reception Year and this is successfully built on in other year groups so that pupils reach above-average standards at the end of Year 6. The good progress is made possible by generally good teaching throughout the school. Teaching has got better in recent months because a number of improvement measures have been introduced. The impact of work undertaken to improve the teaching of mathematics and writing can be seen in the latest test results for Year 6, which show a considerable rise in the standards achieved. However, the school recognises that the changes which have been made to provision in Year 6 need to be applied more consistently across the school. Good support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good and sometimes very good progress. A good curriculum is well enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors, sporting activities and opportunities for outdoor education. The quality of this provision was summed up by a governor who described the school as 'fabulously lively, energetic and busy'.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and reflected in their high attendance and the enthusiasm with which they speak about their school. They say that the 'Glory Board' and awards, such as writer of the week, 'help us to compete and do our best'. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe, adopt safe practices and know that someone will help them if there is a problem. Academic support is not as strong as the pastoral side. This is because measures to improve the academic guidance given to pupils are too new to have had a significant impact on their learning. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community through undertaking duties in school, fund raising and activities such as carol singing for the elderly. Their contribution is being extended through the work of the school council and the 'Wear it Pink Day' which the pupils organised to raise awareness of breast cancer. The leadership of the school is in a period of transition and is satisfactory overall. The deputy headteacher became acting headteacher at short notice and has successfully maintained the good ethos and standards in the school pending the arrival of the new headteacher. However, senior staff have had too few opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the school and the impact of the improvement measures which have been introduced. Progress in dealing with the two key issues from the previous inspection has been slow but has accelerated in recent months. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the new assessment arrangements and other improvement measures are implemented consistently across the school.
- Provide more regular opportunities for senior staff to monitor teaching and the impact of measures introduced to improve the pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From a below-average starting point, children make good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2 to reach average standards at the end of Year 2. Good progress in Years 3 to 6 is maintained, with the result that pupils reach above-average standards at the end of Year 6. The latest test results show a significant improvement in standards in writing and mathematics, with a very high proportion of pupils achieving above-average levels. This is due partly to the particularly good use of assessment information in Year 6. In other year groups, teachers are checking their pupils' progress more frequently and helping them to understand their achievements and what they have to do to improve. As a result, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is improving across the school. However, these procedures are not applied consistently in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good and sometimes very good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their confident and friendly manner and the care they show for one another in school and in the playground. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall. Pupils say that clear guidelines and regular acknowledgement of their achievements help them to behave well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Recent action taken to reduce congestion at the school gate at home time has helped them to be aware of potential dangers. Pupils enjoy their healthy meals and are proud of the many sporting activities, such as tennis, which the school provides for them. They are appreciative of the opportunities that they have, saying, 'It's a friendly school, we are lucky to have all the space and the equipment'. Pupils are enjoying the opportunity to take part in an end-of-year production, saying, 'it's fun and if you're shy it makes you more confident'. Members of the relatively new school council say that they are now meeting regularly and that their views are listened to. The skills which pupils will require in their future lives are satisfactory overall. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and satisfactory progress in information and communication technology. However, opportunities to work in teams and to make decisions about their learning are limited.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Most teaching is good, ensuring that pupils make good progress through the school. Teaching in the Reception Year takes good account of the needs of young children and ensures a good balance between directed and independent activities. The teachers

know their pupils very well and generally set work which suitably matches their needs. Lessons are well planned and the pace of lessons is brisk. However, there is inconsistency in some aspects of teaching. For example, the quality of advice given to pupils through marking is variable. In introductions to lessons, teachers sometimes speak to the whole class for too long. Teaching is improving because teachers are checking their pupils' progress more frequently and using the information to plan lessons and to advise pupils about their achievements and what they have to do to improve. Well-planned support from effective teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good and sometimes very good progress. Pupils' relationships with adults are good, with the result that they enjoy their lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has a strong impact on the progress pupils make through the school. It generally meets the needs of pupils well, although the opportunities provided for pupils to work in teams and to discuss their work together are limited. There is a clear focus on improving writing and numeracy skills. Teachers are beginning to provide more frequent, interesting opportunities in subjects like history and geography for pupils to write for a purpose and this is increasing their enthusiasm. A new emphasis on providing pupils with problem-solving activities in mathematics is also promoting pupils' keenness and helping to raise standards. However, the impact of this work varies from class to class. Pupils are proud of their work in information and communication technology (ICT) and new equipment is ensuring that they make sound progress in this subject. The very good provision for outdoor education, including the nature area and the outdoor classroom, together with a wide range of events and activities, enhances pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. Popular sporting activities and awareness of healthy eating promote pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

In this friendly, welcoming school pupils feel safe and secure. Older pupils organise 'Jumping Jacks' play activities for younger pupils. This is one of the ways in which pupils are encouraged to care for each other. Policies related to child protection, health and safety matters and risk assessments are securely in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as systems to check pupils' progress more frequently are beginning to make a positive impact. The information gained is being used to set group targets and to discuss these with the pupils. As a result, their understanding of their achievements and what they have to do to improve is developing well. However, these procedures are applied more rigorously in some classes than in others.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has managed the school successfully over the past term and has been active in ensuring that it has moved forward. She has been responsible for improving the procedures for checking pupils' progress, seeking and acting on the views of parents and reviewing some policies, particularly the child protection policy. The new assessment arrangements are providing the school with more reliable information about pupils' progress and senior managers are beginning to use it to set more challenging targets for improvement. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory but the current leadership team and subject leaders have not had sufficient opportunity to carry out a rigorous check on the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve further. In particular, there are limited opportunities to monitor teaching and to check on whether new initiatives are really making a difference to learning and achievement. The acting headteacher and headteacher-designate are well aware of this and are planning necessary action. The school works well with parents, who are very supportive of the school, and with outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being and achievement. Governors are proud of the school and provide strong support. However they are not yet sufficiently rigorous in monitoring how well the school is improving.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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.

## 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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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**

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing, and talking to you about your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We found that your school provides you with a good education.

### **Good things about your school**

- You make good progress in your work and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average.
- Your attendance is good. You generally behave well and usually enjoy your lessons.
- You get on well with your teachers and they take good care of you.
- Your written work and mathematics have improved because the teachers are providing you with more exciting activities and helping you to understand how you can do better.
- You are proud of your school and the many after-school activities and special events which the teachers provide for you.
- Your acting headteacher has looked after the school very well.

### **What we have asked your school to do now**

- Make sure that the way your progress is checked, and other activities which are helping you to do even better in your learning, are carried out in the same way in every class.
- Give the teachers more opportunities to visit classes to see how you are progressing in the areas for which they are responsible.

We wish you all the best for the future.