



# Whittington CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123549  
**Local Authority** Shropshire  
**Inspection number** 292708  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Eadie

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Whittington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Oswestry SY11 4DA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01691 662269
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	185	<b>Fax number</b>	01691 662269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David North
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Sean Sibley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27–28 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 292708
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average-sized school serves the parish and village, though some pupils come from further afield. It has attracted extra funding as it is in an area that is recognised as suffering rural deprivation. The vast majority of pupils are White British, others representing a range of other heritages. Very few do not speak English at home. The headteacher took up his post in September 2006.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Both parents and pupils are very enthusiastic about the school, parents saying such things as, 'Children are encouraged to do well, the atmosphere is very good and it is a pleasure to take our children to school.' This is not surprising as this is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher has already created a shared drive to take the school forward and has built successfully on work started by his predecessor. For example, a scheme was put in place in September 2005 to develop pupils' skills of sounding out letters and words. This has already been very successful in the Reception class, and is improving through the rest of the school. This and other initiatives, which are leading to rising standards, are secure evidence of good leadership and management. Leaders have an accurate picture of where the school is at and have therefore been able to put in place good procedures to raise standards. The school is in a good position to improve further. Children start school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected of children of their age. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory through the school and they reach standards a little below average by the time they leave. This is improving as teaching improves. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and it is resulting in satisfactory learning. However, several initiatives have been put in place to accelerate pupils' learning. For example, teachers now plan a wider range of work in their classes, ensuring that there are good levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Because the results of assessment are not used consistently to set clear targets for pupils, these new initiatives have yet to have full impact. Teachers' marking is also not focused on these targets. Pupils are therefore unclear about what they need to learn next to improve their work. Although a good start has been made at giving pupils opportunities for researching and learning independently, particularly for the more able, this is not widespread across the school. Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory and these young children make a sound start to their school career. The school has established good links with many outside agencies and a particularly successful link is with the adjacent pre-school group. The school has included pre-school staff in appropriate training to ensure continuity, and good induction procedures are in place so that children make a confident and happy start in the Reception class. Pupils really enjoy school and work keenly and say this is because 'teachers make learning fun.' The school organises a wide range of extras to make learning more interesting. For example, a potter visited and worked with two classes to produce some excellent clay masks. However, the curriculum is satisfactory overall as insufficient thought has been put into planning for some of the mixed-age classes, which means that some pupils miss aspects of some subjects. Some subjects are also not taught for a term, or even two, so some pupils' learning slows during this time. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring, and all adults are good role models. Parents appreciate this caring environment and a typical comment is 'this is a lovely, caring school and our children talk about school and look forward to going.' Good care, guidance and support are also very evident in academic support. Thorough systems have been put in place to check on pupils' progress to ensure that none are falling behind.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Use the systems of assessment more effectively to set clear targets for learning and use marking to show pupils how well they are meeting their targets and how they can improve.
- Redesign the curriculum so that all subjects are taught regularly and pupils learn all aspects of all subjects.
- Ensure that pupils have more opportunities to research for themselves and learn more independently.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory through the school. Although standards are below average by the time children start Year 1, they have made satisfactory progress in Reception. Progress is better in some areas of language development as effective work has been done to improve standards in this area. Pupils are reaching standards that are a little below average by the time they leave and they make satisfactory progress through the school. Although work has started to improve achievement, there has been insufficient time for it to result in higher standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are making the same progress as their classmates, as clear plans are made for their learning and they are supported well in class. The very few pupils who do not speak English at home are also making the same progress as other pupils, owing to the good development of their understanding of English.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well behaved, polite and considerate and have a good understanding of the community of their school and support each other well. They point to the 'Friendship Stop', the 'Zoners' and the 'Playground Buddies' as being particularly helpful in developing friendships, relationships and harmony in school. Pupils have mature ways to respond to the few bullying incidents that may occur. They are also alert to possible hazards that may affect their safety and offer thoughtful suggestions to overcome them. Healthy lifestyles are a meaningful choice for the pupils. They enjoy the new healthy eating menus for their school meals and the number of cooked meals provided is increasing. Pupils take regular exercise, including sports, games and swimming, and know why this improves their health. The preparation for their future is satisfactory. Basic skills are developed appropriately and pupils have some opportunities to work in teams and take responsibility. In some situations teachers make decisions for the pupils rather than giving them the opportunity to take control.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers have created an orderly and purposeful working atmosphere in their classrooms, based on the very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils. Pupils therefore work keenly. A particular strength of teaching is that there are good levels of challenge provided for pupils of all abilities. Pupils rise well to these challenges and are eager to succeed. Teachers plan a wide range of activities in their lessons to appeal to pupils and pupils recognise this and regard lessons as being fun and interesting. Children in the Reception class benefit from a suitable balance between work led by the teacher and activities that children can choose for themselves. Despite these positive features, pupils are not learning as well as they might be as the very thorough systems of assessment are not being used consistently enough. They are not yet used to identify the next steps in each pupil's learning. This means that learning is not as clearly focused as it could be and that teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Although the curriculum is satisfactory, it is particularly well enriched. For example, all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 learn Spanish and all pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. There is a wide range of wellattended extra-curricular clubs. Visits and visitors throughout the year add to pupils' experiences and enjoyment. There are good examples of addressing multicultural issues within the curriculum, such as celebrating a wide range of religious and cultural festivals throughout the year. The good links with the preschool have a positive effect on learning for the youngest children and these children are provided with an appropriate range of learning experiences. Links with local secondary schools are improving but as yet there are few links which benefit pupils' learning. The school has developed a two-year planning cycle for the mixed-age classes, but there are still inconsistencies in meeting the needs of all pupils. For example, some pupils spend only one year following the two-year programme for Years 1 and 2 and therefore miss some topics. The existing system of curriculum planning also means that some classes are not taught some subjects for one or even two terms. This long break means that previous learning has to be reinforced for some time before new learning can start.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils' safety and care is a high priority for the school and all staff and governors take an active role in this. The headteacher has made a number of effective changes to procedures to care, guide and support pupils after careful evaluation of their quality and impact. Child protection and care systems are very rigorous. Liaison with outside

agencies is effective and communication with parents good, which ensures pupils' different needs are known and can be addressed thoroughly. Academic guidance is appropriate and pupils are kept informed of how well they are doing. The process to set, share and track targets is in its early stages and pupils are not given sufficient information to ensure that they know what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The process by which the school identifies how well it is doing is thorough and involves all staff and governors. Parents and pupils are also involved through regular questionnaires. This has led to an accurate and honest assessment of strengths and areas for development. There is a clear plan to address any issues and the effect of this is seen in improving standards in focus areas, writing, for example. However, some of these initiatives are still in their early stages and have not had full impact. Governors are effective in their management of the school and have instituted some good processes so that they can see for themselves what is going on. For example, one of their termly meetings starts with lunch with the staff and governors then spend time visiting classes. They have a very clear view of how well the school is doing and give good support to the school's leaders in their drive to raise standards. There is a very clear shared vision to take the school forward, and bearing this in mind, along with the progress made in recent years, the school is well placed to continue its aim to improve pupils' progress.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

<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	2
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>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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	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	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 so much for welcoming us when we visited your school this week. We very much enjoyed meeting and talking with many of you. Thank you for telling us so much about your school, which is a satisfactory and improving school. You are clearly enjoying school and are right to be so proud of it. At present you are making satisfactory progress because you are taught satisfactorily. Lessons are getting better and you told us that teachers make lessons fun. These are some of the good things we found:
- Your headteacher and other teachers know clearly what they want to do to make the school better.
- Your behaviour is good and you are developing well into responsible young citizens.
- All adults look after you really well. They make sure that the school is a happy, friendly and safe place.
- The school organises some really good things to make your learning more interesting, such as the potter who visited, learning Spanish and your folk whistle lessons.
- Most of you are very good at making sure that you eat healthily and take regular exercise. You are also kind to each other and play safely together. In order to help you make even better progress, we have asked your headteacher and other staff to:
- Make sure that the targets set for you are clearer so that you know exactly how to improve your work. Teachers will then be able to mark your work to help you do this.
- Improve the planning for some subjects so that those of you in the Years 2 and 3 class and the Years 4 and 5 class don't miss topics.
- Give you more opportunities for you to research and learn for yourselves.