

# Whittington Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124140
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292900
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Field

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Hollis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Meirion Roberts-Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Common Lane Whittington Lichfield WS14 9LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 432487
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 432764

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Lichfield and serves the local army barracks as well as the village of Whittington and villages further afield. When pupils join the Nursery, their skills and knowledge are typically below those expected. Most pupils are of White British origin with a very small number speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, is broadly average. The level of mobility is high and this results in many pupils joining the school at various times during the year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Whittington provides a satisfactory quality of education with some good features that result in pupils' experiencing a rich curriculum and enjoying being at school. The pastoral welfare of pupils is good, particularly with regard to their social and emotional development, safety and protection. High quality induction arrangements for the many new joiners, and the staff's strong commitment to inclusion, result in a happy and harmonious community. Excellent relationships underpin pupils' high-level confidence and keen involvement. In the words of one pupil, 'At school, we feel safe and well looked after; if we fall out at playtime, a Buddy always helps us to be friends again.' Parents are well pleased with the quality of education provided and identify the 'rounded education' as helping their children prepare successfully for the next stage of education and future citizenship.

Academic progress and achievement are satisfactory with signs of improvement in the lessons observed and in pupils' work. Standards at the end of school were average last year, but this year are set to rise significantly, with around 50% of pupils on track to reach the higher Level 5. This is because of better teaching and learning, the positive impact of the school's improvement strategies and the good emphasis placed on meeting challenging targets. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Targets are not sufficiently challenging in all years and the features of the very best teaching are not identified and shared to support consistently good learning.

Strong provision for pupils' care, support and guidance results in individuals showing good personal development. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, good behaviour and above average attendance reflect well on the demonstrable strengths of the school's leadership. Effective leadership and management of the Foundation Stage help the youngest learners in school to make a good start to their education. The relatively new senior leadership team, including the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 1 manager, is very focused on raising achievement and their work is beginning to meet with success. However, they have had limited time and opportunity to undertake monitoring due to full-time teaching commitments. Leadership and management are satisfactory but the lack of a plan, system or structure for the evaluation of teaching and learning impedes a more rapid pace of improvement. Governors ensure all legal requirements are met. They have managed, through good efficiency, substantial improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection. The staff team are united in their determination to do their very best for all pupils. Consequently, the school is well placed to carry on improving.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by making better use of the outcomes of assessment to set challenging targets and to monitor progress over time.
- Ensure that teaching is at least good by sharing more widely the good practice that already exists in planning and setting targets.
- Devise and implement a programme of rigorous monitoring and evaluation and use the findings to increase the pace of change, especially in raising achievement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The school's data show an uneven picture in standards since the time of the last inspection with most pupils typically achieving better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Standards at

the end of Year 6 were average last year, and above average in Year 2. The school's actions to improve achievement and raise standards are showing a positive impact, particularly in the quality of writing, though presentation and spellings still require more attention. The setting arrangements in English and mathematics are a positive feature in quickening the rate of progress but the school recognises that there is scope for further raising achievement in these subjects. Challenging targets for pupils and the booster arrangements are helping to lift standards significantly in Years 5 and 6. However, there is still more to do to ensure that targets are sufficiently demanding for pupils in other years.

Children make good progress during the Foundation Stage where an effective emphasis is placed on developing the early skills of literacy and numeracy, and they are positively encouraged to plan and select their own learning activities. Well coordinated support for the most vulnerable pupils in school, including new joiners and those with learning difficulties, helps them to make steady progress and generally achieve the same as their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good attendance and good personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are effective in preparing them for responsible future citizenship. Pupils are highly confident. They behave sensibly and get on outstandingly well with each other. Bullying is rare with any incidents dealt with fairly, which results in pupils feeling safe and secure. Pupils of all ages show good initiative and take responsibility, for example, as monitors, performing in assembly or leading group work. Through a range of experiences, such as the celebration of Diwali, pupils develop an understanding about cultural diversity and a commitment to race equality. Pupils are at the forefront of promoting healthy lifestyles, with the school council spearheading the campaign to ban unhealthy snacks. Pupils are very alert to health and safety matters with the regular 'walking buses' helping them to develop a strong road safety awareness. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community, for example, by helping to make Whittington the 'best kept village'. The school is successful in nurturing personal goals and future ambitions. The school prepares pupils well for their future careers, by developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as reflected in pupils' satisfactory achievement. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work with enthusiasm because lessons hold their interest and are well managed. New arrangements for grouping pupils work effectively. The introduction of an agreed approach to assessing the quality of pupils' work, introduced since the last inspection, has resulted in teachers improving their skills of evaluating the levels that pupils reach in their work. Marking is effective and clearly tells pupils what they do well and how they can improve their work. The use of 'WILFs' to help pupils know what is expected in terms of quality and content is a very positive feature with some teachers using it at the outset of lessons as well as at the end of a unit of work. However, not all teachers identify precisely enough in their lesson planning what pupils are to learn or provide them with targets as to how they can improve

their work. School leaders have yet to find effective ways to ensure that best practice is more widely shared.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, assists pupils in building secure basic skills and is very responsive to local needs. The two-year programme caters well for mixed-age group classes. Strengths lie in the good Foundation Stage provision made for the youngest learners, those who are vulnerable and those who join the school at various times. There is close attention paid to promoting equality of opportunity for boys and girls from Nursery to Year 6, though more consistency is required in meeting fully the needs of those with specific gifts and talents. The well conceived personal, social, health and citizenship education and the very wide range of visits and visitors encourage pupils' good personal development. Around two thirds of pupils frequently take part in the after school clubs because, as one pupil said, 'They are interesting and good fun!' The well forged links with the local high school help Year 6 make a smooth transfer and have good impact on preparing them well for the next phase of their education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

A very caring ethos is evident in all aspects of school life and results in all pupils feeling safe and well looked after. Effective systems are in place to promote pupils' good social and emotional development, and for safeguarding and protecting them from all forms of racism and abuse. However, not all written policies are up-to-date. High quality induction arrangements for the many joiners help them make a settled and happy start to their new school. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are confident to seek help to improve their work. Pupils are successfully involved in assessing their own level of understanding at the end of each unit of work using coloured symbols known as 'traffic lights', so that teachers can provide individual support according to need. The school has recognised the value of using this to support the setting of next step targets, but practice is inconsistent.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher is much respected by parents and staff for his strong pastoral leadership. He knows each pupil by name, and shows genuine care for their enjoyment of school and well-being. Together with the very capable deputy headteacher and leadership team, he has established good data analysis procedures that are being used effectively to pinpoint weaknesses in provision. The school has embarked on raising achievement in English and mathematics and its strategies are proving successful because of the staff's full commitment to doing their best. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, as reflected in the self-evaluation form, but monitoring is too informal and lacks rigour. For example, there is very little recorded about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning that can be used to share best practice and support the school's more rapid improvement. Good links are in place with a range of agencies to extend and enrich pupils' experiences and staff work energetically to involve parents in the life of the school, and make it a focal point for the community.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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	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>	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	2

### 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>	2
<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.



## 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 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	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome and helping us during the inspection. It was super having lunch with you and chatting to the school council about their role. We especially liked hearing about the activities you enjoy best. The school is providing you with a satisfactory education with some good features. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy being at school, get on very well with each other, behave sensibly and find your work interesting.
- The school takes good care of you and this makes you feel safe.
- The youngest pupils in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- Those of you who join the school part-way through the year are well supported.
- Your parents are pleased with the all-round education you receive and say it nurtures good citizenship.
- The headteacher and governors have worked hard to make the school a pleasant place to be with improved accommodation and well equipped classrooms.

We think the school is right to focus on using the information about your progress to help teachers plan even better lessons, to make sure you always know what is expected of you and to make the targets they set for you even more challenging. We also think that the headteacher and senior leaders need to spend more time looking at what you are doing in lessons so that they can share the very best things they find with everyone.

We hope you will continue to try your very best for your teachers and let them know if you could be given even harder work.

Best wishes for the future.