



Whitton Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124684
Local Authority SUFFOLK
Inspection number 293074
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Shakespeare Road
School category	Community		Ipswich
Age range of pupils	3–11		Suffolk IP1 6ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473741480
Number on roll (school)	228	Fax number	01473742492
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Janette Kerry
		Headteacher	Miss Ann Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school situated in the centre of a large pre-war council estate in Ipswich. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are reflected in the much higher than average proportion receiving free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with about 29% from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. A small minority are at the early stages of learning English. A few pupils come from the Traveller community. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than in most schools. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational need. The attainment of those entering the nursery is much lower than usually seen in children of that age. Over the last two years several key staff left due to promotion. There have also been significant periods of long-term sick leave.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in one respect is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit. Although currently pupils are making satisfactory progress, over the last couple of years progress has been inadequate. Consequently, pupils have not reached the standards of which they are capable. Attainment has been low. In response to this, the school is working with consultants on an Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) in order to raise standards in English and mathematics. This programme has placed an emphasis on identifying pupils' needs through effective assessment, setting targets for improvement and raising the quality of teaching. Early indications are that this work is improving the rate of learning and pupils are achieving more. However, standards are still not high enough in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make a sound start in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory but, in order to reach levels appropriate for their age in the Year 2 and Year 6 national assessments, their rate of progress must increase to address the legacy of underachievement. Recent improvements in target setting are beginning to address this and early signs are encouraging.

Although overall the quality of teaching remains satisfactory, there are some good features. Due to consistent good teaching in Years 5 and 6, good progress is evident in pupils' work, and standards are improving. However, teaching is not yet consistently good enough across the school. A particular strength underlying the teaching is the 'nurturing school' ethos and outstanding relationships between staff and pupils. This results in pupils feeling happy and safe in school. Because they find activities interesting and are very keen to learn, pupils behave well. Their personal and social needs are very well addressed because of the particularly strong support given in school and the good use of outside experts. The school works very well in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in creating a staff team which works well together and wants to improve teaching and learning. Senior and middle managers are keen to develop their work further and there is a need to develop their roles in relation to monitoring performance and driving up standards. Improved systems to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are newly established and staff now have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development which is consistent with inspectors' judgements. Because of these recent improvements and its involvement on the ISP, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the information gained from monitoring pupils' work and progress is used effectively to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress by raising the quality of teaching to a consistently good level.
- Develop the leadership role of senior and middle managers with a more focused emphasis on raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with low levels of attainment, particularly in their language and personal development. They make good progress in their personal and social development and satisfactory progress with their basic literacy and numeracy. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1 they are keen to learn and behave well but have generally not reached the nationally expected goals in their reading, writing and mathematical development.

In the 2006 national tests and assessments, pupils' standards were low and they made inadequate progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils now make satisfactory progress throughout the school because of recent improvements in teaching, assessment and target setting. The school narrowly failed to reach its realistic targets last year but has just raised its literacy and numeracy targets for the next two years to reflect pupils' recent better progress. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall although in individual lessons, when receiving specialist support, they frequently achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to others in the class. The inspection did not focus on all subjects but saw evidence that standards are good in art.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good with some important outstanding features. Their cultural awareness is developed very well through many aspects of the curriculum. The school has worked hard to promote racial equality and pupils show very great respect for one another. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils live active lives. They talk with pride about one another's achievements. For example, several boys commented on how pleased they were that the girls' cross country team had won a recent inter-school competition. Pupils of different ages consider each other's feelings well and know how to keep safe from bullying. 'Whitton Crew' children keep a special look out for any children who appear unhappy and also carry out key tasks around the school. The successful school council works hard to improve the school environment and raised money to buy more playground toys. Pupils develop good communication skills, good self-esteem and learn to work very well with others. Although their academic skills need to improve, the quality of pupils' social skills equips them well for future life in the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is not consistent as it ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. In a typical good lesson, pupils are highly motivated with a clear idea of what they want to achieve. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and pupils enjoy challenging work. Effective use of well trained teaching assistants means that pupils are well supported. In particular, those who have learning difficulties become well motivated and want to achieve. Where teaching is only satisfactory this is because the objectives of the lesson are not fully shared with pupils and the work does not always captivate their interest, so that they begin to lose concentration. Consequently the rate of learning slows. The way teachers check children's work is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in marking. It does not always clearly indicate how children can improve. Relationships in class are exceptionally good and a calm atmosphere in lessons encourages children to work hard.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, there are several good features. The major strength of the curriculum is shown in the way pupils find learning fun and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. This was expressed well when pupils groaned after being told that they had to stop writing and then quickly cheered when told they would have more opportunities to do similar work again. The successful personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils know how to keep healthy and is influencing what they eat and drink. Recent developments, such as the work on pupils' thinking skills and philosophy lessons, are helping them to gain a better understanding of their learning needs. However, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils make as much progress as they could in English, mathematics and science. More work is needed on making links between subjects to ensure the systematic development of cross-curricular skills and the best possible use of teaching time. Popular clubs and activities help pupils to develop new interests and extend skills. School visits and visitors add another dimension to pupils' learning when they are offered a more 'hands on' experience through, for example working with an artist in residence or visiting an air museum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school is good. Staff work effectively to ensure pupils' health and safety, and child protection procedures are fully in place. There is very good medical care available through trained staff and good links with a range of specialist agencies. Pastoral care is exceptionally good. Because teachers know and care for their pupils very well pupils, in turn, feel happy and safe. Pupils' concerns are taken seriously and

acted upon. Pupils who are vulnerable receive very good support. In the past, learners have not been set sufficiently challenging targets and this has restricted their progress. This is now being addressed. For example, some more able Year 6 children have been given targets appropriate to Year 7. One child from the school council said, 'I'm really trying hard to meet this new target.' Effective monitoring of pupils' progress to support their academic guidance is now in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been very successful in creating a school which is valued by the local community and creates in children a very positive attitude to school and learning. The views of all members of the school community are taken into account and parents are very positive about what the school offers. Some excellent art work has been achieved through the very successful 'Home-School Projects' which show how parents have worked with the school to support their children's learning.

The school's self-evaluation systems are satisfactory and improving. There is now a clearer focus on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning within the established caring and supportive school ethos. However, pupils' progress remains only satisfactory overall because of the legacy of underachievement. This was due to leadership and monitoring systems not being robust enough to identify quickly weaknesses in teaching and learning and their impact on standards. The governing body now has a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development because it is beginning to check how the school is progressing towards meeting its aims.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
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?	3
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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 December 2006

Dear Children

Whitton Community Primary School, Shakespeare Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6ET

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your work. We were particularly pleased to hear that you enjoy school and found you to be very happy and polite children. I have listed below some of the things we particularly like about Whitton Community School.

- You work hard and, because the teaching is improving, you are beginning to make better progress.
- Your art work is good and it really does brighten up the school.
- You behave well, look after each other and work and play together very well.
- Staff work together well as a team and they enjoy teaching you.
- The school council works hard to make sure that any issues that are raised are treated seriously.
- You think school is fun because you do interesting things. Well done to your recent successes in the football and cross country.
- Staff look after you well and you feel safe. We were pleased to hear that you would go to a member of staff if you had problems.

Miss Taylor and the governors have agreed that they would like you to make better progress and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science. They will do this by checking how well you are doing more frequently and thoroughly. Then they will use this information to improve their teaching. Some of the more senior teachers will also help Miss Taylor to manage the school and help to raise standards.

We left the school feeling sure that you would continue to work hard and attend regularly.

We wish you well in the future.

Ruth Frith

Lead Inspector