



Whitefriars Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121904
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 296447
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Marion Thompson

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Boughton Drive
School category	Community		Rushden
Age range of pupils	7–11		NN10 9HX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01933 356351
Number on roll (school)	234	Fax number	01933 356586
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Paul Stuart
		Headteacher	Helen Woodhouse
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2000		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007	Inspection number 296447
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Whitefriars Junior School is of average size. Most of the pupils are of White British origin. A small proportion of pupils come from other minority ethnic backgrounds and a few of these are at the early stages of learning English. On entry to the school children's attainment is above average, although it was broadly average for pupils currently in Years 3 and 4. A relatively high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Fewer pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2005. Since then four of the eight teaching staff have been appointed, including senior staff, to replace those who have left.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education for its pupils. In the recent past, pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. Pupils are now rapidly making up lost ground. They reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science and their achievement is satisfactory. There have been marked improvements in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.

Recent improvements in the school stem from the strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher. Better teaching, the development of subject and senior leadership and closer tracking of pupils' achievement are leading to more consistent progress in all subjects. Despite this, leadership and management are only satisfactory because, although improving rapidly, subject and senior leaders currently have inconsistent levels of expertise in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and learning. Even though teaching and learning are satisfactory, the most able pupils are not always challenged enough and occasionally make insufficient progress. Marking is inconsistent and does not always give guidance on how pupils can make further progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but does not always fully meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. However, as a result of the sound monitoring and self-evaluation processes led by the headteacher, teachers are becoming increasingly skilful in identifying when pupils are falling behind and planning activities to help them catch up. Good attention is paid to the provision for gifted and talented pupils in subjects such as music. Pupils' personal development is good. They acquire good basic and social skills to help ensure their future well-being. They feel secure and act sensibly, paying good attention to their own safety and that of others. Pupils enjoy being in school and their attendance is good. They are well aware of how to live a healthy lifestyle and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall, with secure health and safety procedures in place. Although the school has robust systems in place to track pupils' progress, sometimes pupils are not given a sufficiently clear idea about the next steps that will help them to improve their work

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement by making sure teachers provide work to meet the different needs of all pupils, especially the most able.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders and senior managers in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and learning.
- Ensure that teachers consistently provide clear advice and guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work, especially through marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average. In the past few years pupils in most classes, especially the most able, did not make as much progress as they should have done. The 2006 national test results represented particularly poor progress for Year 6 pupils as a result of disruptions to staffing and pupil management issues throughout their time in school.

Improved teaching and closer monitoring of pupils' work are leading to satisfactory progress across the school in English, mathematics and science in the current year. There has been significant improvement in pupils' reading, extended writing and handwriting in English. Standards in mathematics, a priority for this year, have risen sharply. Major improvements in reading are leading to improved work across the curriculum. Pupils are on track to meet targets which represent satisfactory progress. However, in a minority of lessons, more able pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could, because they are not presented with a high enough level of challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. This is because the support they receive is sensitive to their needs. Pupils at the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and get on well together. Their positive attitudes and above average attendance help them to learn effectively. They show a good level of awareness of how to keep safe and have regard for the safety of others. They make a good contribution to the local community, for example by raising money for charities of their own choice. Within school many pupils take on responsibilities, such as helping to settle children into the school. The school council responds to pupils' concerns with growing confidence. It has been instrumental in introducing playground shelters.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other, and have a good grasp of the beliefs, values and cultures of several world religions within Britain and in other countries. Pupils develop good social skills through the wide range of community links and residential visits.

Pupils have a good understanding of the value of a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthily and a large proportion takes part readily in the sports activities offered. Pupils are well prepared for future life through developing good basic, personal and social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory and improving teaching is resulting in improved pupil achievement and enjoyment of learning. In many lessons, teaching is good. Learning objectives are now clearly explained and lessons move at a steady pace. Consistent management of pupils ensures that lessons are calm and purposeful. Typically, lessons present pupils with a suitable level of challenge and a range of activities which interest them. Assessment is accurate and its use has improved recently, leading to work matched to pupils' needs. When difficulties are identified, pupils are targeted for extra support. However, despite the improvements, occasionally more able pupils are provided with work that is too easy. In a small minority of lessons too little time is left at the end to review work, so that teachers and pupils remain unsure about how good learning has been. Marking is informative and tells pupils how well they are doing, but does not always provide advice on how to improve. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, enabling them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Closer monitoring by subject leaders is resulting in a curriculum that provides, in the main, a satisfactory match to the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is most successful for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Occasionally, planning of the curriculum does not take sufficient account of the needs of the most able. Where pupils make less progress than expected the curriculum is flexible enough to respond to their needs.

The school provides a range of activities to widen pupils' experiences and extend their personal development, for example circle time, French lessons and specialist coaching in sports. The curriculum is broadened by a wide range of specially planned events, such as art weeks. After school clubs are popular and cover a wide range of activities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support other subjects is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school looks after pupils well. Child protection arrangements, risk assessments, the racist incident log and health and safety procedures are secure. Procedures to deal with all forms of bullying are effective so that the school is a safe, happy place. Pupils are confident in going to teachers or the headteacher when they have any concerns. Pupils' personal development is supported well.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. The great majority of pupils know their targets and most know what they need to do to achieve them. However, there

are inconsistencies, because in a small minority of classes pupils are given insufficient advice on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership, which sets a clear direction for school improvement. In the recent past, turbulence in staffing and staff absence has slowed the pace of improvement. These issues are now largely resolved. Subject leaders and senior staff are rapidly gaining the expertise in monitoring teaching and learning and the curriculum that they require to perform their roles more effectively. However, there is still a need for some further development. The school's clear and accurate monitoring and evaluation of its work, which is currently led by the headteacher, forms a secure basis for school improvement planning. Systems have been put in place, which have significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning and the tracking of pupils' achievement. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science are rising and achievement is improving. The capacity for further improvement is sound.

Governors are supportive and meet their statutory obligations. They are increasingly well informed about the school and provide a satisfactory level of challenge for the headteacher. The school's links with parents and the community are good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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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 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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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	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

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?	3

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	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	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

Thank you for making us welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you thought about your work and your school. Your school provides you with a sound education and a lot of things are improving very quickly. Here are some of the most important things we found:

- You make satisfactory progress, because you have good attitudes to work and your teachers provide you with suitable work and help. There have been big improvements recently, especially in standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Those of you who have learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress, because of the good support the school provides.
- You behave well in school and you are very sensible and responsible. You treat others with politeness and respect and attend regularly.
- You enjoy the special things the school plans for you to do, like going on trips, attending clubs and activity days.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourself safe and healthy and make a good contribution to the school and wider community.
- All staff in school make sure you are safe and happy.
- The headteacher is doing all she can to ensure the school carries on improving.

We have asked the school to make sure that the work teachers set always presents the most able pupils with more challenge and to make sure you are all told how you can improve your work. We have also asked for staff to have more help in developing their own skills.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your learning as much as you do now.