



Whitnash Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125560
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 299951
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Janet Thompson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Langley Road
School category	Community		Whitnash
Age range of pupils	4–11		Leamington Spa CV31 2EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01926 426773
Number on roll (school)	98	Fax number	01926 337755
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Judy Falp
		Headteacher	Elizabeth Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 February 2007	299951

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves an area in which there is a mix of owner-occupied and rented accommodation. The majority of pupils is of White British heritage with about 25% from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Eight pupils do not use English as their first language at home. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LDD) is above average. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of the school other than in the years expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school has made good progress since its last monitoring visit and now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The teaching has improved considerably and is now good. This has helped pupils to make better progress than at the last inspection. Standards are below average but achievement has improved, particularly in Year 2 and Years 5 and 6 where for many pupils recent progress has been good. Most pupils in these classes are currently attaining standards broadly in line with that expected for their age. Progress is satisfactory across the school.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Reception children are in a mixed class with Year 1 pupils and make adequate progress. Learning objectives are sometimes too broad and work is not always accurately matched to the different abilities of the pupils. The curriculum has been redesigned appropriately and reflects the needs of the mixed age group.

Pupils behave extremely well and they have a very good attitude to work. Good guidance enables pupils to develop a very good appreciation of the needs of others. Pupils are reflective about their school and pleased that lessons are often 'interesting and fun'. Lesson planning is good and work is well matched to meet pupils' needs. In some lessons assessment that involves the pupils has led to increased progress. This good assessment practice is not in place across the curriculum.

The curriculum provides the expected breadth of experience to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Trips and additional activities are well planned to support the curriculum and these help to motivate pupils. The school recognises that there is still more to be done to make the curriculum more exciting and to establish firmer links between subjects.

Leadership and management are now good. Regular monitoring and evaluation have contributed significantly to the required improvements. The school has been well supported by the governors and the local authority. The school has developed a team of skilled professionals to lead improvements in the future. The headteacher has a detailed knowledge of all pupils and monitors their progress well. This information is used effectively to target additional support where it is required. The school has used resources well since being subject to special measures. However, falling rolls have led to a deficit budget. Governors, working closely with the headteacher, have developed suitable ways of managing the situation whilst maintaining the capacity to improve standards and achievement for pupils. Value for money is satisfactory. The staff team has shown the necessary commitment and has worked hard to improve the education on offer to the pupils. The detailed evaluation of work within the school, supported by an effective joint approach to change and development, reflects the school's good capacity to further improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge in the Foundation/Year 1 class so that knowledge and skills that provide the building blocks for further development are firmly in place.
- Ensure the best practice of involving pupils in assessing their own work is consistently embedded across the curriculum.
- Develop curriculum planning to ensure links are made across subjects, helping to improve creativity and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout their time in school. There are classes where the achievement of pupils is good and this has helped to address gaps in learning from previous years when the school was causing concern. Standards are below average but rising. Children start at the school in the Reception year with varying levels of attainment but overall attainment is below average. The weakest areas are communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Foundation and Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. From Year 2 upwards progress in lessons is good. Teachers are effectively using assessment to ensure work challenges pupils of all abilities. Pupils with additional needs also make satisfactory progress as a result of suitable and well planned support. Careful tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics has helped to identify any areas of learning that pupils are finding difficult. This information is used to ensure additional support or work is put into place quickly and progress is improved as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development of pupils is good. The behaviour of learners and their very good attitude to work are strengths of the school and reflect good social and moral development. Pupils are supportive of each other. The supportive ethos of the school is reinforced by staff who treat pupils and each other with respect. Attendance is average but is rising as a result of diligent monitoring and subsequent action. Progress slows when pupils do not attend regularly and often enough.

Pupils are happy at school. Their good development in spiritual and cultural aspects of learning is reflected in work across the curriculum and particularly in art. Pupils relish opportunities to make decisions and take on responsibility. These help them to develop effective teamwork and organisational skills. The school council has been involved in organising fund raising events for charity and has recently helped governors evaluate aspects of provision at the school. All pupils have a chance to make suggestions to the school council but many do not think they receive enough feedback. Pupils have a good knowledge about the role of exercise and diet in helping them to stay healthy. The choices provided by the canteen help to encourage healthy eating but there are still some pupils who make very unhealthy choices.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is now good and this has resulted in pupils often making good progress in lessons. The teaching seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory, and was good or better in Years 2 to 6. Lessons are well planned to provide a variety of types of learning including group discussion, paired work and practical involvement. Teaching assistants are well deployed in most classes. This helps to keep the pace fast enough to provide challenge but also gives time for reflection and thought.

Effective use of assessment helps teachers match work to pupils with differing levels of ability. There is good practice in assisting pupils to develop independent learning skills and this has also helped enhance their progress. Teachers of mixed age classes ensure suitable challenge for both year groups but, although practice is satisfactory in Reception and Year 1, more could be done to increase the challenge for some children. In this class teaching assistants are not always given a significant enough role in adult directed activities to help increase progress. Pupils are, however, encouraged to be independent in organising themselves and finding their own equipment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, offering suitable breadth for all pupils. The shared formats for planning have ensured coverage of the required curriculum. Close monitoring has helped to ensure lessons are effectively planned and pupils receive their entitlement.

The school has rightly identified that there is more to be done to enhance links across subjects, particularly between the core subjects of English and mathematics and other subjects such as history and geography. The curriculum is enriched with a range of well planned external visits and residential trips as well as special events in school. Pupils find physical education motivating and physical skills are further developed by the popular 'Huff and Puff' activities at lunch times. After school clubs are very popular with both pupils and parents and help to develop a good range of interests including fitness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Assessment and tracking are good, helping to identify any areas of difficulty quickly, and effective action is taken as a result. Pupils have a good knowledge of their targets and recognise the need to improve their work. There are good examples of pupils being involved in assessing their own work and this helps to give them a good understanding of how

they can improve further. This very effective practice is not consistent across the school in all subjects. There are very good relationships throughout the school, based on a balance of respect and fun. There is an emphasis on encouraging pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour rather than have it managed by adults. This has helped pupils develop a good understanding of the consequence of their own actions and, as a result, they are able to take on responsibility and develop independent work skills. The school meets the necessary requirements to help keep pupils safe and staff are diligent in their care of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, with the support of the staff team, has successfully improved the school so that it now provides a satisfactory standard of education.

Improvements made following previous monitoring inspections have been maintained and built upon, demonstrating good capacity to further improve. Monitoring of planning and pupils' achievement is regular and thorough and involves all teachers. The information gathered informs the next steps in development. The staff team work collectively on improving practice, with subject leaders taking an active role in monitoring and evaluating aspects of provision.

The school has rightly identified the next steps required for improvement and has planned suitable action. Evaluation is thorough and gives a good base from which to improve. Staff and governors have a good understanding of their strengths and where improvements are still required. However, the lack of a single format bringing together different aspects of evaluation makes review of overall progress more difficult than it needs to be.

Governors provide suitable challenge and actively seek out and listen to the views of pupils and parents. The parents consulted during the inspection were complimentary about the behaviour of the pupils at the school. The majority spoken to were happy with all aspects of the school but a few had some concerns about mixed age classes. The school recognises these concerns but is not explaining the actions taken to ensure pupils continue to increase their progress clearly enough to parents. It is refreshing to see the parents, once again, actively running a school association.

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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?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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 for welcoming me to your school. I am writing this after my fourth visit to your school and each time I have visited you have been working harder and making more progress. As a result, your school no longer needs to be inspected so often as it is now satisfactory. I made this decision for a number of reasons. You are all making satisfactory progress and some of you are making good progress. The headteacher knows how well you are doing and makes sure that if you find something difficult you receive extra help. The teachers make sure that lessons are interesting. They check you understand the work and make sure it is at the right level to move you forwards. I was especially pleased to see some of you looking at your own work and deciding if you could improve it. The staff and governors are making sure that your time in school is interesting and enjoyable and that it helps you be prepared for the future. I know you enjoy the many opportunities you have to visit interesting places and this helps to make different subjects more interesting. You behave extremely well and I was impressed by how supportive you are of one another.

There are still some things that need to improve further.

- I have asked the teachers of the youngest children in the school to make sure the work helps you learn more. You can help by doing more work as I know you are keen to learn.
- I would like more of you to be able to look at your own work and decide how it could be improved. This would be especially useful if it happened in all the subjects.
- I have asked teachers to make the links between subjects clearer and more creative.

I will miss my visits each term to your school but I am confident that you will continue to help improve the school. I wish you all the best for the future.