

Whybridge Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102284
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307959
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Keith Turner
Headteacher	Mr Peter Rogerson
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Blacksmith's Lane Rainham RM13 7AH
Telephone number	01708 552870
Fax number	01708 521706

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils transfer to the school at age seven mainly from the local infant school. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average and few of these speak a language other than English as their first language. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than in most schools. Typical of other local schools, the number on roll has been falling. The school has reduced from three- to two-form entry except in Year 5 where three classes remain.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whybridge Junior is a good school, which has made good progress since its last inspection under the good leadership of its enthusiastic headteacher. He has welded together a hardworking, dedicated and committed staff. In the last five years, pupils' attainment has risen significantly. Good teaching combined with extra lessons at lunchtime and after school in Year 6, have a marked positive effect on pupils' good achievement. Progress from Year 2 in 2007 was exceptional in science and mathematics and among the highest in the country. Currently attainment is above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving well in the main, but pupils who find reading and writing difficult are not making similarly good rates of progress.

The staff have created a positive ethos for learning and pupils are pleased to attend school. They enjoy school and develop well as young people. They are very polite, work very hard and take a keen interest in all that they do. Parents think highly of the school and comment on the big improvements in the last five years. One parent writes: 'Since my daughter has been at the school, I have seen it continue to improve. The school is a clean, bright friendly place, which the children seem genuinely proud of. ...I think the staff and headmaster are doing a great job.' Parents appreciate the way in which the school engages them in their children's learning, for example explaining teaching methods and providing advice. They made very favourable comments about a recent mathematics evening when staff and pupils taught mathematical calculation methods to parents. One parent said: 'I now understand how to do division after all this time.'

The school is a well-ordered community where everyone works well together for the good of the pupils. This is seen in tidy classrooms, orderly routines, easily accessible resources, well organised pupil records and the clear sense of purpose. Staff's professional development is good and teamwork is strong. Staff and pupils participated enthusiastically in World Book Day, which took place during the inspection and dressed up as characters from literature they had been studying in different classes. The curriculum is good and the emphasis given to the teaching of basic skills is strong. Work in geography and history is not as effective because a heavy reliance on worksheets in these subjects does not help pupils to apply their English skills well enough and prevents them from developing research and note-making skills.

Pupils have a good awareness of healthy and safe living, for example understanding the proven health risks in smoking. They contribute well to the school and local community. The choir sings to the elderly in the locality. They are very well prepared for their futures and develop an economic awareness by organising their own fund-raising events for charity. This is a school with a good capacity to improve even further. Staff and pupils work well together so that all are clear of what is expected. The resulting consistency in approaches and procedures supports the good education provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for pupils who find difficulty in reading and writing so more of these pupils make good progress.
- Enable pupils to develop and apply their literacy skills in history and geography more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but overall it is slightly above average. In 2007, results were very high in science and above average in mathematics. Pupils achieved well in English overall, but the concentration on successfully improving writing resulted in less attention being given to reading activities. Consequently there was a fall in the average level reached in reading. Pupils' attainment is currently above average in English, mathematics and science and most pupils are achieving well. However, pupils who have difficulties in learning to read and write do not make enough progress. This is because there has not been enough liaison between specialist remedial work in withdrawal groups and classwork. In the main, pupils make better progress in Years 5 and 6 than lower down the school. Progress accelerates rapidly in Year 6. For many children, the neatness of their handwriting is a real strength.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are excellent. They work neatly and take a genuine pride in their written work. They listen attentively and participate very well in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of living healthily and safely. They know the importance of eating fruit and vegetables daily and can explain road safety codes. They regularly participate in exercise and many walk to school. The democratically elected school council is developing rapidly in its role. It runs its own stationery shop. Their recent sponsored multiplication challenge raised much money to re-design playground equipment and markings. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is around the national average largely because of holidays taken in term time. Attendance is monitored regularly. The school is very alert and takes swift action when pupils are absent without notification from parents. Most pupils are punctual. Pupils get on extremely well together and demonstrate high levels of mutual respect. They say 'Everyone works as a team in the school and everyone's there for each other if there's a problem in the family.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Well-organised classrooms, effectively planned lessons, extremely well behaved pupils and excellent relationships contribute to effective learning. Some teaching is outstanding. Time is used very profitably. Teachers use modern electronic whiteboards most effectively to present lessons. A brief video clip from 'Shrek' seized Year 3 pupils' interest as they considered character writing. The teacher then used the technology well to discuss a prepared description of Pinocchio, which helped pupils write about their own fairy tale character. Classroom displays support pupils' knowledge of writing and mathematical techniques well. Teaching assistants are effective during activities but sometimes are not involved enough during the first part of lessons. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is particularly strong. Teaching is not as imaginative in history and geography. Marking is satisfactory. It is usually up to date, but sometimes does not help pupils to know how to improve particular pieces of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a very strong emphasis on basic subjects and the quality of work in these is very good. Nevertheless, the school realises the need to make adjustments in the provision for pupils who have difficulties in reading and writing so that they make better progress. This review is now underway. A wide range of educational trips, extra-curricular activities, residential visits, special subject focus weeks and events enrich the curriculum very well and keep it exciting. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their computer skills. Good links with secondary schools support work in art, French and sport very effectively. Specialist provision promotes pupils' enjoyment and progress in music very well. The good structure to the programme in personal, social and health education ensures that pupils have a good understanding of matters that affect their health and personal development. Mathematics is used well in science to calculate and record results, but overuse of worksheets in history and geography restricts the development of literacy skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are effective and staff know and understand them well. Good links with other professional agencies support the assessment and review of pupils who have social, emotional or learning difficulties. Good attention is given to health and safety matters and risk assessments so that the pupils feel safe and well cared for. Very good links with parents ensure that the school and home work closely together.

Pupils' work is tracked well in mathematics and English so that their rates of progress can be assessed. Assessment in other subjects is developing. Pupils understand what they must do to get to the next national curriculum level in their work. Their success in reaching these steps is updated regularly with good involvement of the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's good leadership creates a very positive and harmonious atmosphere in the school with a clear focus on raising standards even further. Senior and subject leaders support the headteacher very well. Core subject leaders have made a good start in their revised roles and responsibilities. Monitoring of provision is effective, but senior staff have not always ensured that all pupils who find learning difficult have been making good enough progress. Improvements are now taking place in this provision. There has been much improvement in teaching quality and standards reached since the last inspection because monitoring is seen as a developmental process and any issues are followed up. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate and reflects the keenness of the staff to do their very best for the pupils and families that they serve. The school has done much to improve the quality of the learning environment since the last inspection. It is a homely and welcoming place of learning where 'everyone works together to achieve more.'

The governing body is very supportive of the school's work and enthusiastically led by its chair. Its recent restructuring into three committees has helped to streamline its work and is giving

a greater focus and purpose to meetings. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths. It is developing in its role as a critical friend.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

18 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whybridge Junior School, Rainham, RM13 7AH

Thank you so much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school, for sharing your work with us and talking to us about your school. We were most impressed with your school's improvement since its last inspection. You attend a good school. Mr Rogerson and his staff have worked very hard. Most of you make good and at times outstanding progress and many of you reach levels above those expected for your age. However, those of you who have difficulties in reading and writing are not making as much progress as many of the other pupils and we have asked the school to ensure that you make better progress.

We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, politeness and your hard work in lessons. You listen very well to what the teachers are telling you. You join in and show much interest. You know a lot about healthy eating and keeping safe. Your school council is developing well and we were interested to learn about the successful multiplication tables challenge to raise money to improve the playground.

The staff take very good care of you and work very well as a team. You have a good range of extra activities to take part in and you really enjoy these. The teachers provide a good range of lessons over the year, but your work in geography and history is not as exciting as it could be. We have asked the staff to enable you to do your own writing in these subjects in future instead of relying on worksheets. This will assist your writing skills. You take very good care with your work and your handwriting is very good.

We would like to wish you every success in the future and hope that all your ambitions come true. We are sure that you will be very successful if you continue to work hard. Thank you once again for your welcome. We shall remember your excellent behaviour and politeness for a long time.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector