

Whitecrest Junior and Infant School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103922
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308454
Inspection date	2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Morris
Headteacher	Heather Williams
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2004
School address	Whitecrest Great Barr Birmingham B43 6HQ
Telephone number	01213 586348
Fax number	01213 586348

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by children in the Foundation Stage; improvements to the teaching of boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Years 1 and 2; provision for the older girls; and work to encourage pupils' creativity in learning. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority, and the study of school documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Whitecrest Primary School is situated in the extreme north-east of Sandwell. Many pupils come from Birmingham and Walsall and relatively few come from the area immediately around the school. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Three-quarters of the pupils are from White British families. Pupils from Indian backgrounds are the next largest group. Most pupils are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the level found in most primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whitecrest Primary is a good school with many outstanding features. Its numerous successes are due to the outstanding calibre of leadership and management. The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and staff. They work towards these willingly because they know their efforts will be valued and that they will be well supported. Challenging but achievable targets are set for pupils to meet. This has resulted in rising standards and accelerating progress. Standards are now well above average and progress is good throughout the school.

When children start in Reception the majority have the expected levels of skills and knowledge. Staff ensure they settle quickly and happily and make good progress. By the time they join Year 1, nearly all the children have reached or exceeded their targets. These above average standards are maintained through Years 1 and 2 and results in the national assessments at the age of seven show that pupils have continued to make good progress. By the age of 11, standards are particularly high in English and pupils make outstanding progress in the subject. Standards are well above average in mathematics and science, where progress is good. More able pupils do well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are generally as successful as other pupils and Indian pupils do particularly well. While there are some differences in the results of boys and girls from year to year, in lessons, boys and girls are equally well motivated and they make similar progress.

The school sets high expectations for academic achievement and pupils' personal development is valued greatly. Children in Reception do well in their personal, social and emotional development and older pupils show outstanding behaviour, relationships and concern for others. They have an acute sense of personal safety and try very hard to follow healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the many sports and physical education activities provided and know how to sustain their energy as they exercise. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, which contributes to their good achievement. Attendance is outstanding because pupils do not want to miss a minute of school. Pupils are fully aware of their own and others' communities. They are involved actively in links with children in Sri Lanka, collecting money to improve their lives. Pupils are prepared completely for the next stage of their education and life outside school.

The successful all-round development of pupils is due to the good quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. Teaching is consistently good from Reception to the end of Year 6. Lessons are brisk, the work has the right degree of challenge for the different ability groups and pupils are focused on their learning. The pupils are adamant that their teachers make learning fun and interesting and that they are helped to learn lots of new things. The marking of English books is of good quality and improvements are being made to marking in other subjects where the focus is less consistent on what has been achieved and ways to improve. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the work of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress.

The curriculum is well planned and involving. There is much practical work, noticeably in science, which underlies the good improvement to standards and progress in recent years. There is also a firm focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which produces outstanding results. The school has a very strong tradition of musical and drama activities with all pupils learning to play a number of musical instruments. The school is currently working successfully to focus the curriculum even more on pupils' creativity. The curriculum for children in Reception is geared well towards their needs. While pupils show good independence and self-reliance in

learning, opportunities for individual research, investigation and problem solving are hampered by the library being in an early stage of development. Currently the library is a shell within the new extension, although there are well documented plans for its development into a first class learning centre. At present, pupils have to use the library books within their classrooms whilst the new library is being equipped.

The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent, largely because of the dedication of all staff. Parents recognise this strength and are unanimous in their view that their children are particularly well looked after. There is a strong partnership between the school and parents and school leaders respond well to parents' and pupils' concerns, comments and ideas. There are secure systems to safeguard every pupil and child protection measures are trustworthy and effective. Staff provide good guidance for pupils on academic matters. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and anyone not reaching their potential is identified quickly. Effective support is then given to put them back on course for good progress.

School leaders and governors have a detailed understanding of the successes and priorities of the school and judge its performance accurately. Thorough checks are made to ensure that pupils progress consistently well in academic and personal matters and that the quality of provision is up to the mark. Leaders are not complacent and governors ask critical questions to ensure decisions benefit the pupils. There has been sustained improvement since the previous inspection, especially to pupils' achievement. Because the school is so well led it has excellent prospects for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they are taught well and their curriculum is well matched to their needs. They build self-confidence steadily and show increasing independence in their work. This demonstrates the good progress made in their personal, social and emotional development, which is a little weaker than other areas when they start school. The development of language and literacy skills is a strength that gives the children a firm platform for future effective achievement in English. Standards are above those expected by the time the children join Year 1. The children are extremely well cared for and helped to do well in their work and play. Older pupils support the children in Reception with care and kindness, which benefits both age groups. At present the accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is rather limited and this affects the range of activities that can be offered. There are appropriate priorities, once finance has been raised, to extend the space available to enhance provision further. The Foundation Stage is led and managed with considerable skill.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the library to provide facilities that enable pupils to develop the full range of independent research, investigation and problem-solving skills.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

5 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitecrest Primary School, Whitecrest, Great Barr, B43 6HQ

Many thanks for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I was impressed by your friendliness and politeness. You helped me to find out a lot about your school and I can see why you enjoy being there. You told me your school is really good, and I agree. In my report I have written about the many good things I found. The most important ones are:

- You reach above average standards and do well in your work.
- You are extremely well behaved and look after each other carefully.
- You are well taught and work hard in lessons.
- You learn about lots of new things in all the subjects you study.
- You are well cared for by your teachers and helped to make good progress.
- Your headteacher leads the school with skill and other adults help her make sure you have a good education.
- Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their work and get on well.

There is one area for improvement to help you learn even more successfully.

- Your teachers should make sure you have the best school library possible.

I know that you will help your teachers make this improvement. When the library opens, you can help by using it to help your research and investigations, and when you are solving problems.

Good luck in your work.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

5 November 2007

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David Carrington
Lead inspector