

# Whitgreave Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104298
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308565
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Cross
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Gillen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Low Hill Crescent Low Hill Wolverhampton WV10 9HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558876
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558878

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector investigated the following issues: current achievement and standards; pupils' personal development and well-being; teaching and learning; elements of the school's curriculum; personal support and academic guidance; and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work, discussions with staff, the chair of the governing body and pupils, and the parent questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own grades, as provided in the SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Although most pupils in this smaller-than-average school are White British, about 20% of them come from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, with a broadly average proportion having a statement of special educational need.

The school has achieved Physical Education Sports School, Healthy School and Investor in People status, and the Top Links Award in recognition of its involvement with local organisations.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school provides outstanding care for its pupils. 'Start the day the Whitgreave way' means breakfast, followed by a lively activity session. Pupils respond enthusiastically and, as one pupil said, 'This wakes me up and then I'm ready to learn!' Positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are evident throughout the school. There is a strong sense of purpose as pupils learn and thrive in lessons, at play and through involvement in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities provided. Yoga, judo, dance, football and cooking are some of the many clubs and activities that promote pupils' excellent understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make sensible choices at lunchtime, trying hard to eat a diet that includes fruit and vegetables. They know that too much chocolate or 'sweet stuff' is not good for you.

This strong emphasis on activity and fun ensures pupils' thorough enjoyment of school. The curriculum is exciting, as teachers carefully link subjects together to provide interesting learning experiences. The many visits and visitors to the school motivate pupils and support their love of learning. For example, three pupils spoke animatedly about their visit to Moseley Old Hall. 'We went into a priest hole and hid, just like King Charles II,' they said. Cultural development is strong because the curriculum ensures breadth of experience in art, music, dance and literature and makes full use of pupils' varied cultural backgrounds.

Parents are very appreciative of the school's work and many say this school is brilliant, with very happy children, who come home excited about what they have been doing during the day. They respect the headteacher and staff, commenting on their friendliness and approachability. 'The teachers are always there to help with a friendly and warm smile, ready to listen to any problems', is a typical comment. Pupils say they feel safe and know exactly who to go to if they are troubled. They speak warmly of the ways in which staff help and look after them. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say there is very little bullying. They understand how to keep safe, knowing not to speak to strangers and to be careful when crossing the road. They enjoy helping each other, and Year 2 pupils are proud to be school council members. They think adults respect their views, as shown by the ban on adults smoking in the playground, which happened in response to the school council's concerns. Although pupils greatly enjoy school, attendance is below average, as a minority of parents do not send their children to school as regularly as they should. However, the school's very effective procedures to improve attendance are having a significant influence, as shown by a few pupils' attendance improving to 100% last term.

Promoting pupils' safety and academic and personal well-being is integral to this school's work, and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Good assessment procedures are in place. Pupils' progress towards challenging but realistic academic targets is analysed thoroughly. The information is then used very well to identify the next steps in pupils' learning and which pupils need extra help. Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2. Even so, this represents good achievement from when children first start at school in the Foundation Stage, when their skill levels are well below those expected for their age. By Year 2, pupils' outstanding personal skills and their good progress in basic skills mean that they are prepared well for the next stage of their education. All teachers make certain that pupils are clear about what they are learning in lessons. Teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities. In the most effective lessons, pupils are clear about what they have to do to succeed in their work. For example, when writing instructions, pupils knew that using words such as 'first', 'next' and 'after' would help them to order their instructions

for making a cup of tea or making alphabet biscuits. This practice is not consistent, however, and there are missed opportunities for pupils to assess for themselves how well they are completing their work.

The many strengths of this school arise from the very strong leadership of the headteacher, who is supported well by all staff and governors. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, resulting in a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Through rigorous checking procedures, school leaders identified that, although progress is good in the Foundation Stage, weaknesses in children's knowledge of letter names and sounds, writing and calculating skills affect their rate of learning in Years 1 and 2. Action taken last year resulted in improved performance in these areas of learning. However, never complacent, the school has continued with this work so children get off to an even quicker start when they enter Year 1. The progress made so far and the school's success in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being provide a clear indication that there is good capacity for making further improvements.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get a good start to school in the Foundation Stage. Although they make good progress, few children attain the goals expected for their age, notably in aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. School leaders responded well to this concern and introduced a daily session of teaching letter names and sounds. Children are consistently encouraged to record their ideas and staff maximise opportunities to extend problem-solving skills. Even though these actions have influenced standards, staff continue to focus on these aspects of learning, so children can quickly access the Year 1 reading, writing and mathematics curriculum.

Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They very quickly settle into school, feel safe and develop very positive attitudes towards learning. Good teaching is evident and staff use assessment well to plan interesting activities both in and out of doors. Relationships are good and praise helps to develop children's self-confidence. Induction procedures are good and parents are happy to leave their children in school. As one parent said, 'The teachers are kind and caring and that gives me peace of mind'.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate the progress of the Foundation Stage children in knowing letter names and sounds, writing and in developing simple calculating skills.
- Enable pupils to assess for themselves how well they are learning

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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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitgreave Infant School, Wolverhampton WV10 9HS

- Thank you for the friendly way in which you spoke to me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and I can see why some of you say, 'School is cool!' I think your school is a good one that is getting better all the time. Here are some of the things I liked.
- I think the morning activity sessions are great fun and give you an excellent start to the school day.
- You are very keen to take regular exercise, and I think you are very lucky to be able to attend all the many clubs your school provides. I have never known an infant school with so many sporting activities!
- You know how to eat healthily and gave me good advice about what might happen if I ate too many chocolates.
- You go on lots of visits and this helps to make the curriculum exciting. It is one of the reasons why you enjoy school so much. I expect hiding in the priest hole was really good fun!
- Your parents think your school is good, and teachers are helpful and friendly.
- All the adults look after you exceptionally well and help you to feel safe. You also know how to keep safe by not speaking to strangers, and taking care when crossing the road.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you like to help each other.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have very good ideas about how to make your school even better.

Although, I think you make good good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to do two things to make sure you make even better progress.

- Help the Foundation Stage children learn the names of letters and their sounds, get better at writing and use numbers to solve very simple problems.
- Make sure you can check for yourselves how well you are learning in lessons.

From my day at your school, I know you enjoy learning and will try hard to help your teachers to make your progress even better. I am pleased to see how attendance is improving and so all of you keep trying hard to reach that 100% attendance goal.

Yours faithfully Lois Furness



28 September 2007

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