

Whiston Willis Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104433
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	308600
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	358
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Jayne Dignam
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Maloney
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Milton Avenue Whiston Prescot Merseyside L35 2XY

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2008
Inspection number	308600

Telephone number
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils who attend this larger than average sized school are of White British heritage. The school is situated in an area which is considerably more socially and economically disadvantaged than is usual. A higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also higher than normal. A tiny proportion speaks English as an additional language.

The school is part of a children's centre that provides extensive extended provision for pupils before and after school, at weekends and during the school holidays. This provision is inspected and reported on separately. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises a Nursery at which children either attend in the morning or afternoon and two Reception classes. The school has many awards in recognition of its work internationally, for encouraging physical activity, for promoting healthy lifestyles and for encouraging environmental awareness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has several aspects which are outstanding. Good leadership and management ensure that pupils' personal development is excellent, that they have an exciting curriculum, are extremely well looked after and supported. Starting with below average skills when they join the EYFS, pupils are enabled by effective teaching to make good progress throughout the school and to attain broadly average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Parents overwhelmingly support the school's work, typically commenting, 'everybody at this school should be commended for their dedication to the children.'

Pupils respond very positively to the many enriching opportunities provided by the school's innovative curriculum. The recent inclusion of an international focus has widened pupils' horizons, made them much more aware of global issues and brought to life their studies in French and geography, for example. The wide range of out-of-class activities is well attended by many pupils who use them to exercise regularly, to further their interests and skills in the arts and to develop their ability to cooperate and to take responsibility. Pupils' sensitive awareness of the lifestyles of children from a different country, and of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves, is illustrated graphically by their fundraising to set up a crèche for children with HIV/AIDS in a South African township. The effect this has had on Whiston pupils' empathy for those less fortunate than themselves has been profound. All this contributes to the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion. Behaviour is excellent and pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons. Members of the school council represent the concerns of other pupils to the school's management, including governors. Those who make up the international council, research global and environmental issues and regularly present their findings to the school.

The school does well to enable more pupils than is the national average to attain the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6. However, less than the normal proportion reach the higher Level 5. This is because within the overall good quality of teaching there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Parents are clear that their children are very well cared for and that excellent support is always available for them if needed. The most vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well and fully included in all the school's provision. This enables them to achieve well and to enjoy school thoroughly.

Leaders and managers do an excellent job in creating a very positive ethos and in promoting community links and close parental partnerships. Being at the heart of a children's centre, with its wrap-around care provision and its adjacent arts and sports centre, places the school at the core of the community. The very well respected headteacher is often central to activities involving the school and the wider community and she has been proactive in introducing an exciting curriculum. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, especially in the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in the quality of teachers' marking. These improvements, together with the further enhancement of the curriculum and of accommodation, illustrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those expected overall. Their personal, social and emotional development and their communication, language and literacy skills are often well below those expected. From these starting points they make good progress in both

the Nursery and Reception classes because they are well taught and their learning is well organised. Staff ensure that both the indoor and outdoor areas offer very stimulating environments which encourage children both to explore and to participate in a wide range of practical activities. Leaders of the EYFS make sure that children have opportunities to choose activities for themselves, but also balance this appropriately with adult-led learning. On a frosty morning children were excited and intrigued to handle and observe chunks of ice and to identify the types of animals, penguins and polar bears for example, that would be at home in icy water. Parents, who work closely with teachers, are very certain that their children are well looked after and comment on how much they enjoy school. The care with which staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development and their speaking and listening skills, results in particularly good progress being made in these areas. By the time children enter Year 1 their skills are at the levels broadly expected in most areas of their learning. Staff constantly observe and record children's achievements, especially 'break throughs' in their understanding or awareness. While these are used to inform teachers' plans, they are not always used fully to promote individual children's progress. In the temporary absence of the EYFS manager, provision is being well managed. However, understandably, some aspects of the new EYFS curriculum have been slower in their implementation than they might have been.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently challenging enough for the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. Having entered the school with below expected skills and well below in the two crucial areas of personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy, pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Given their starting points, they make best progress in English. Pupils start Year 1 with standards that are broadly as expected. The school has clear evidence that pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 relative to their individual starting points. Standards are currently below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, that of those who find behaving well more difficult than others and that of pupils with average ability, is good. The more able pupils make satisfactory progress. The proportions attaining at the higher Level 3 in the Year 2 teacher assessments and at the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests are below average. Those very few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well as a result of very good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. The cultural awareness of pupils is something of which the school should be particularly proud. This is in no small part due to the work of its international council. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and put their excellent knowledge of health issues to good use, as seen in their participation in extra-curricular clubs and their healthy eating habits. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in and around the school are consistently excellent. Pupils enjoy themselves, show great consideration for each other and feel safe in school. This is facilitated to a large degree by the fun factor that is built into many lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, because of a range of effective strategies

in use and the hard work of the learning mentors. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community, particularly the global community. This is very evident in their efforts to alleviate the problems facing children in poorer circumstances all over the world. Life skills, for example the ability to collaborate, are very well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is of good quality. Teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers form very positive relationships with pupils. The sensitive way in which support is provided for pupils who are less able and for those of average ability enables these pupils to achieve extremely well personally and to make good academic progress. However, in some instances, the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged resulting in them making satisfactory rather than good progress. In the most effective lessons, pupils work at tasks which are practical and relevant. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson learning was brought to life by a teaching assistant, who acted out the role of a government spokesperson responsible for promoting healthy school meals. The lively question and answer session and subsequent written task prepared pupils well for the ensuing debate with the parallel Year 6 class. Most teachers set pupils achievable targets and make sure they understand what they are intended to learn during lessons. They make good use of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to make ideas clearer and to make learning fun. The quality of displays in classrooms is excellent and provides pupils with much stimulation and enjoyment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum makes a particularly effective contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their enjoyment of learning. The recent introduction of the international dimension to the curriculum has greatly enhanced their awareness of global issues and of the art, religions and traditions of different cultures. Residential trips to venues in this country and in France promote pupils' independence, their ability to work in teams, to cooperate and to relate to many different people and environments. The French visit also gives Key Stage 2 pupils an excellent opportunity to practise the language they learn in lessons. The school's Activemark award reflects the excellence of the curriculum in promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' basic skills and provides very well for their future economic awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are looked after outstandingly well in a safe and secure environment. They are well supervised all round the school, as can be seen in the numbers of adults who watch over them at playtimes. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements. Good teamwork ensures that staff are able to use their knowledge of pupils and their families to begin to break down barriers to learning from the earliest stages of their education. This high quality care leads to pupils being confident, feeling safe from bullying and showing an excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. All policies and processes relating to the health and safety of pupils are attended to scrupulously. Rigorous strategies to improve

attendance have recently proved successful. Attendance is now average after a period when it was below average. Teachers' marking in pupils' books is informative and supports independent learning because pupils know how to improve their work. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well organised. The care, guidance and support received by pupils enables them to achieve outstandingly well in their personal development and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

While the quality of leadership and management is good overall. The experienced headteacher is extremely well regarded by the parents, pupils and local community. She has worked tirelessly to improve the resources and accommodation available, not only for pupils and staff but for parents and other community members. Leaders and managers have ensured that this is a very inclusive school, especially with regard to the most vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The effective governing body has been proactive in the support and encouragement it has provided for such initiatives.

The school promotes staff's professional development well, for example, in developing greater understanding of different learning styles and in the more effective use of ICT for planning and teaching. Checks on the quality of pupils' work and of teaching are frequent and appropriately rigorous. Self-evaluation is largely accurate but somewhat overgenerous in its view of the school's overall effectiveness. While leaders and managers have an excellent influence on some aspects of the school's work, their impact on the crucial areas of pupils' achievement and on the quality of teaching and learning are good. Systems to track and evaluate pupils' achievements and progress are becoming increasingly rigorous and relate to teachers' performance targets. Governors carry out their duties well. They ensure that ample, good quality resources are available to support pupils' learning and development. Governors have links with the school council and they visit the school to become more familiar with its work and pupils. Financial management is prudent and contributes well to the good value for money the school provides.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Whiston Willis Community Primary School, Prescot, L35 2XY

On behalf of the other inspectors and myself I would like to thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Whiston Willis is a good school and some of its work is excellent.

I was most impressed with your extremely good behaviour and how well you get on together. You seem to enjoy learning very much and several of you told us how much fun lessons are and that your teachers were always ready to help you out if you find things difficult. There are lots of very interesting things for you to do and it was clear from the lovely displays in classrooms and around the school how much your teachers care for you and want to provide you with exciting surroundings. Both you and your parents told us how well cared for you feel you are safe in school. The many after-school clubs you have, and the visits you go on when you stay away for a few days, really help you to become more grown up and to get on with each other very well. The visit to France and the links you have with the children in the crèche in South Africa help you to understand how people in different countries live.

Your headteacher and the other adults who help run the school are doing a really good job in many ways. They are particularly good in bringing your community together, so that everyone is working for your benefit and for the local people. I have asked the school to do the following in order to improve your education.

- Make sure that teachers always give those of you who find learning a bit easier, work that makes you think hard and find more difficult.

Thank you for being so open and friendly to us – I wish you all well for your future.