

Whitegate End Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105658
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	308907
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Smith
Headteacher	Mr A Guy
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2003
School address	Butterworth Lane Chadderton Oldham Lancashire OL9 8EB
Telephone number	0161 6825067
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Whitegate End Primary and Nursery School is an average sized school that serves the local community, where there is some social disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a small number come from a range of other heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is just below average, although the proportion varies significantly from year group to year group. The school provides all the features of an extended school including before and after-school care. It also provides an extensive range of clubs as well as full-time nursery provision and pre-school activities for parents and children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Whitegate End Primary and Nursery School is a satisfactory school that has strengths in the way it promotes pupils' personal development and looks after pupils. There have been considerable improvements to many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. As a result, the school is becoming increasingly popular with parents. They are very pleased with the standard of education provided commenting on the 'great atmosphere' and saying that the school is a 'happy place to go every day'. Care, guidance and support are good. Parents praise the way that staff go out of their way to talk to them and discuss any problems and pupils feel confident saying, 'The teachers always listen.'

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils learn to get on very well together and by the time they reach Years 5 and 6 they are very confident and mature individuals. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils respond very well to the system of promises that they are 'always' expected to keep. They really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Involvement in the school council, the Eco Team and the buddy systems ensure that pupils are able to make a good contribution to the school community. There is a very clear commitment to racial equality. The curriculum is satisfactory with real strengths in personal development but with less strong focus on mathematics and on the needs of the more able pupils. A strong focus on personal and social education ensures that pupils know how to keep healthy and fit. Pupils are keen to be involved in the outstanding range of clubs and particularly appreciate the good sporting and musical opportunities.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation stage. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2, pupils reach average standards, although few reach the higher Level 3. Although achievement is satisfactory through Years 3 to 6, pupils make more rapid progress in upper Key Stage 2 than in lower Key Stage 2. Achievement in English is better than achievement in mathematics and standards in mathematics are not high enough. Teaching is satisfactory. There is much teaching that is good but sometimes expectations are not high enough in lower Key Stage 2. Some lessons move on at too slow a pace and pupils are not set work that really interests and challenges them. Throughout the school there is a tendency to set very similar work for both average and more able pupils and this holds back the progress of the more able.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and is central to the positive ethos of the school. He has not been afraid to make difficult decisions and has provided effective challenge. This has resulted in standards and achievement being improved to satisfactory from a low base. These improvements have been sustained in recent years. Instability in the composition of the management team has hampered further improvements. The headteacher has effectively kept the ship on course while it changed crew. Self-evaluation is secure and the school is aware of where its strengths and weaknesses lie. Although the current leadership team are very new to their roles, they are enthusiastic and are planning further developments.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery class with skills that are generally below those of other children, particularly in their personal development. A strong focus on developing children's social skills and their independence ensures that children make good progress in their personal development. Lively teaching and interesting activities ensure that children enjoy their time in school and learn effectively. They make particularly good gains in their understanding of number. The school has taken positive steps to make sure that there is an exciting range of things to do that motivate boys and girls. The outdoor area is underdeveloped but staff make a considerable effort to bring toys and activities outside so that pupils can still have fun outdoors. Children are very well cared for and parents comment positively on how quickly their children settle in. Good management of the Foundation Stage including a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses is helping to drive further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in mathematics particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that pupils learn effectively.
- Make certain that more able pupils are set work that provides appropriate challenge.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection and standards have been raised from well below to broadly in line with national averages. In 2007, standards in writing at the end of Year 2 improved and are now close to national standards. Progress in Year 3 to 6 is uneven reflecting differences in teachers' expectations. In 2006, pupils made better progress in English than in mathematics and this pattern of achievement continued into 2007. The school's analysis shows that areas of weaknesses vary from year-to-year but skills relating to shape, space and measurement are often underdeveloped. Well focused support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils with English as an additional language make appropriate progress, but more able pupils could sometimes do better. The school exceeded its targets for English but failed to meet its targets for mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a very strong sense of belonging to their school. Outstanding spiritual, social and moral development means that pupils show high levels of concern for each other and have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils love coming to school and they work hard in lessons. Their behaviour is always of a very high standard but there are a few dull lessons when pupils are a little bored. Playtimes are very pleasant and pupils respect each other and have lots of fun together. Pupils say that 'Everyone has friends'. There is a strong commitment to racial and social equality, and pupils from very varied backgrounds work and play well together. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that teachers deal with any minor issues quickly. Cultural

stereotypes are starting to be challenged. The school council has worked hard to promote healthy eating and pupils join in enthusiastically the wide range of sporting opportunities including badminton, cross country and football. Very positive attitudes to learning and the ability to work well with others combined with secure standards of literacy results in pupils being well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although much of the teaching is good, there is still some less effective teaching which slows pupils' progress in lower Key Stage 2. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Very good relationships with pupils mean pupils have the confidence to ask questions and ask for help when they do not understand. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and groups encouraging very good personal development. Information and communication technology (ICT) is often used well to support learning. Other resources are used well in Key Stage 1 to bring learning alive but resources are used less effectively in Key Stage 2. Explanations of mathematical concepts are occasionally unclear and leave pupils confused about what is expected of them. Learning support assistants provide valuable support particularly for lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties. Some work is too easy for the more able pupils. This limits their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The provision for literacy is satisfactory and promotes satisfactory achievement. However, the provision for mathematics particularly in Key Stage 2 is not as strong. A focus on writing has led to improvements in standards particularly at the end of Year 2. Provision for ICT has improved considerably since the previous inspection. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education resulting in increasingly mature pupils who are enthusiastic learners and know how to keep healthy and safe. Enrichment is good. There is an outstanding range of well attended clubs that make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. A wide range of expert visitors support the curriculum and promote both health and safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. The school is a caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. Procedures that keep pupils safe are robust. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and parents and carers say that they are very pleased with the care provided, including mentoring. The school's complex tracking systems have allowed senior managers to identify where pupils are underachieving. However, the school has identified that systems need to be more user-friendly in order to maximise their impact.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's charismatic leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that the school provides a positive supportive environment where pupils can flourish. Although the whole staff team make an important contribution, the headteacher has been the driving force in securing pupils' outstanding social and moral development, and standards of behaviour. There are good links with parents, outside agencies and the wider community which support pupils' well-being. The school is very committed to promoting community cohesion. Target-setting is realistic but only adequately challenging. Its impact is to maintain pupils' achievement and standards at a satisfactory level rather than driving further improvements. The school has worked hard to improve the standards of pupils' writing and has plans to tackle weaknesses in mathematics. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The current leadership team are very new to their roles. They are very aware of what needs to be done to secure further improvements but it is far too early to judge their impact.

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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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	1
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	2
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?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

Inspection of Whitegate End Primary and Nursery School, Oldham, OL9 8EB.

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listened very carefully to what you had to say. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a great time at school and learn well because there are lots of interesting things for them to do. We were very impressed by your behaviour both in and out of lessons, it is outstanding! You really enjoy school because you all get on well together. You have a satisfactory range of things to do but it is clear that you really like all the clubs. You told us that you value your 'always' badges and keep your promises to behave very well indeed because you really want to attend after-school clubs. It was good to hear that you know how to keep fit and healthy. You make a good contribution to your school - well done!

The people who run your school do a satisfactory job. They make sure the school is a very happy place where you are well cared for and safe. You told us that your teachers look after you very well and you find them helpful. You work hard in your lessons. You are making similar progress to pupils in other schools and reach similar standards. You are doing better in English than mathematics and we have asked your teachers to help you make faster progress in your mathematics lessons. The teaching at your school is satisfactory. We know that some of the teaching in the Juniors could be more exciting and that some teachers should expect a bit more of you. We have asked your teachers to make sure that work is not too easy for the most able pupils.

I wish you well for the future.