

# Whitehill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106084
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	309024
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Jude Wells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss J Connell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2004
<b>School address</b>	Whitehill Street West Heaton Norris Stockport Cheshire SK4 1PB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4802142
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6128980

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school serving an urban area of social and economic disadvantage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status. Since the last inspection pupil numbers have declined significantly because of a drop in the number of school age children in its locality. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are now taught in two mixed age classes as a result.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. There are significant strengths in the way it promotes pupils' personal development and in the care, guidance and support it provides. These aspects are good. Parents are very supportive of the school and value highly the care and nurturing environment it provides. 'My children enjoy coming to school'. 'The teachers are very approachable'. 'I am pleased with the care and support everyone gives them', are typical comments.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 from their well below average starting points to attain below average standards by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress slows to satisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning in the mixed age classes is too inconsistent. The school has concentrated its efforts on improving literacy. This has led to a steady improvement in standards in English which are below average by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics, however, are well below average and not yet as high as they should be. Teachers are starting to come to terms with the challenges presented by the mixed age classes by planning for a wider range of activities and for more effective use of teaching assistants. Much remains to be done, however. The school has developed its use of assessment data effectively so that it is now good. It enables pupils' progress to be tracked regularly towards targets so that pupils understand better what they need to do improve their work. Assessment data are also being used to hold teachers increasingly to account for standards and achievement in their classes.

Since the last inspection the school has maintained its strong focus on pupils' personal development and on the care, guidance and support it provides for them. Vibrant displays of pupils' art work around the school help to create a welcoming and stimulating environment for learning. Pupils are courteous, inquisitive and welcoming to visitors. Adults are very good role models who have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and good manners. As a result, pupils treat them and each other with respect. Their behaviour is good in lessons and at play times. This is a highly inclusive school which values each individual equally. It provides a safe and nurturing environment in which pupils trust adults to help them deal with problems. The learning mentor is doing very good work in building links with parents and the local community. She has brought a strong focus on the importance of pupils coming to school regularly. This has resulted in a significant improvement in punctuality and attendance. Pupils' personal development is well supported by the curriculum which helps promote enjoyment by providing a wide range of enrichment activities. However, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is too limited to ensure that pupils' skill levels in this important area are as high as they should be.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is providing the school with a necessary focus on improving standards and achievement further. Teachers and support staff are working as a team to bring this about. The more effective use of assessment data and identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge are starting to impact positively on standards. They are giving the school satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage make sure that children get off to a good start. Children make good progress overall from starting points which are well below those normally expected. Their progress in acquiring language and social skills is particularly strong because teaching focuses on these important aspects to give children a solid basis for future learning. Children settle quickly into school routines. They feel safe and grow in confidence. The stimulating displays and nurturing environment add to their enjoyment and interest. A good balance is maintained between teaching children new skills and encouraging them to learn independently through a wide range of activities. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with additional needs so that they make rapid progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Ensure the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently effective.
- Improve lesson planning and the deployment of teaching assistants in mixed age classes.
- Improve provision and pupils' skills in ICT.

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

Consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 helps pupils maintain the good progress they make in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in writing and mathematics but close to average in reading. The rate of pupils' progress slows in Key Stage 2 because the quality of teaching is too inconsistent and teachers have struggled to adapt to the challenges of mixed age classes. In 2007, standards in English and science were below average. In mathematics, however, standards were well below average. The school missed its demanding targets for mathematics by a considerable margin. Data on pupils' present progress and observations of their work show clearly that the school's better use of assessment data to identify and rectify gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge is starting to have a positive impact. Progress in mathematics is improving and pupils are set to come closer to their demanding targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as they move up through the school because of the good and effective support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' happy faces show how much they enjoy school. Pupils show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They take advantage of the healthy food options available and the sporting activities on offer. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know who to go to if they are unhappy. The rare instances of bullying are promptly dealt with. Pupils understand the importance staying safe. They value road safety training, fire awareness and the drugs education they receive as part of the good personal, social and health programme. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Visitors, musical activities and art displays enhance their good understanding and respect for

different races, cultures and faiths. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities by becoming playground buddies, for example. The active school council has brought about many improvements to playground facilities. Enrichment activities such as trips out and a Year 6 residential extend the pupils' awareness of the outside world and enable them to work independently and in teams. Pupils' preparation for the next stages in their education is satisfactory because their basic skills in mathematics and ICT are not yet high enough.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It varies greatly across the school, however. Where teaching is consistently good, more commonly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, it is well planned to provide a wide variety of stimulating activities to keep pupils motivated and interested in their learning. As a result, they make good progress and enjoyment levels are high. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to set demanding tasks and ask challenging questions which make pupils think for themselves. As a result, pupils make good progress and enjoy learning. Where teaching is less successful, however, teachers spend too long talking so that pupils are expected to listen rather than being actively involved in their learning. Lesson planning does not include a wide enough range of activities to meet the full range of pupils' needs, especially in the mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. Teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In providing support for other pupils, however, they are not consistently used to best effect to help teaching meet the mixed range of pupils' abilities and ages. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Their comments are helpful in telling pupils how to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. It is satisfactory overall, however, because provision in some important subject areas such as mathematics and ICT are not yet as strong as they should be. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. It ensures that every pupil can take part in all learning activities. Links between different subjects, to further pupils' learning, are limited. The school works effectively with its local secondary school to enhance provision for languages and sports. It also receives support for ICT but the limited number of computers in school makes whole-class follow-up-work impossible. There is a variety of enrichment activities including visits to the theatre and a residential experience for Year 6 pupils. Visitors to the school enable the pupils to work with musicians, artists and drama teachers. The pupils appreciate the extra-curricular activities on offer such as sports, art, cookery, singing and science.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school's work. This is particularly true for the most vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The support they receive from well qualified and dedicated staff ensures that they make good progress. The school also works effectively with a number of outside agencies to extend provision for its pupils. Good transition arrangements ensure that entry to the Foundation Stage is smooth and

that Year 6 pupils are confident in their transfer to secondary school. Monitoring and assessment procedures are clear and consistent. Effective systems to track pupils' progress inform staff of pupils' future needs. In mathematics, however, pupils do not yet receive effective enough feedback on where the weaknesses lie and how to tackle them. A wide range of intervention strategies and support is then provided for specific individual needs. The school has appropriate procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. Policies and procedures are made clear to staff and reviewed regularly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving as the focus on raising standards and achievement sharpens. Procedures for self-evaluation are thorough and give the school an accurate view of what needs to be tackled to bring about the necessary changes. Better use of assessment is starting to give the school the capacity to monitor pupils' progress regularly and deal with any underachievement. Professional development of staff is regarded as increasingly important. Performance management targets are focusing more closely on what teachers have to do to raise standards and achievement. Teachers are given time to plan together, and this has been successful in establishing higher expectations of what pupils could and should achieve. This is also helping to develop teamwork across the school towards the common goal of raising standards. Governors are supportive of the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They are not yet sufficiently rigorous, however, in holding the school to account for its work and standards.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### 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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### 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

<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>	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	2
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

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

Inspection of Whitehill Primary School, Stockport, SK4 1PB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. What you told us helped us reach our judgements about your school.

We think your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education because overall you make satisfactory progress in your learning as you move up through the school. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 you make good progress because teaching is consistently good. Your progress in Key Stage 2 slows, however, especially in the mixed age classes in Years 3, 4 and 5 where teaching is struggling a little to meet the wide range of your needs. Standards in English are improving year on year but in mathematics standards are not yet as high as they should be. However, your school does lots of things well, for example, how well it cares for you and all the opportunities it gives you to develop into such happy and polite young people. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and how well you all get along together. We also think the school has done a good job in improving how it tracks your progress so that it can help you do as well as you can in your learning.

In order to make your school even better we are asking it to do four things:

- raise standards in mathematics
- make sure that all your lessons in Key Stage 2 are equally good and effective in helping you to learn
- make sure that your teachers plan their lessons and use teaching assistants effectively to suit your needs, especially in the mixed age classes
- improve how well you use computers to support your learning.

We are sure you will do everything you can to help all the adults who work with you bring about these improvements to make your school even better.