

# Whitehill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107496
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	309410
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geoffrey Yates

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	482
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bob Stoker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Roy Hepplestone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Occupation Lane Illingworth Halifax West Yorkshire HX2 9RL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 244471
<b>Fax number</b>	01422 249389

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## Introduction

The school was inspected by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large school with its own nursery. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also higher than usual. The school has gained a variety of awards including, Investors in People, the Healthy Eating Award, the ICT Mark, Activemark Gold, the Eco Bronze Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark. A Learning Support Unit for local schools and a Pupil Referral Unit are housed within the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents speak of it very highly. The following comment is typical of many, 'Whitehill is an excellent school and I am very happy with the way my child is being taught and cared for'. The headteacher's energy and determination to provide the best education possible is shared by all. The needs of pupils are always put first. The school's highly inclusive ethos ensures that each individual pupil is valued and challenged to reach her or his full potential. Consequently, pupils thrive.

Achievement is outstanding. Most children entering the Foundation Stage have attainments well below those expected for their age. They make good progress and, at the start of Year 1, their skills and knowledge, while still below average in most cases, have improved well. However, the lack of suitable outdoor provision limits the opportunities and the learning of children in the Reception class. By the end of Year 2, standards have risen to average and by the end of Year 6 have improved again to be above average. Excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to learn successfully and quickly make up ground. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers motivate their pupils very effectively and work very hard to increase their self-confidence. No time is wasted in lessons. Pupils are given many opportunities to evaluate their own work and to be involved in planning the next steps in their learning. Support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the success of lessons. Assessment and marking of work are used highly effectively to set challenging learning targets.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They are extremely happy in school as demonstrated by their good attendance. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and very positive. They say that their teachers always encourage them to try their best. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. They greatly enjoy developing skills, including skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' personal development is strongly fostered by the enrichment opportunities that are built into the vibrant curriculum, which is of outstanding quality. The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are rigorously monitored and pupils are kept informed of what they must do to improve further. Child protection procedures are well established and are regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school thrives because of a conscientious leadership team that is committed to continuous improvement. The headteacher's inspirational leadership and his commitment to involving staff at all levels have helped the school move from strength to strength. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. They rigorously monitor all aspects of its work and use their findings to improve on previous best. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents and strong links with community partners that benefit the pupils' learning. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Governors take their roles very seriously and successfully hold the school to account. The school has excellent potential to make further progress and provides outstanding value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Most children enter school with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language skills. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made good progress but do not quite reach the levels expected for their age. Leadership and management are good and teaching is of a good quality with examples of outstanding practice. In the Nursery, children have access to an extensive range of well planned high-quality activities and provision. The outside provision is exciting and the boys, in particular, join in well. At snack time, they eat the broccoli they have grown themselves and their knowledge of the world is extended through opportunities to explore through linked learning activities. The carefully planned key worker system and home visits ensure that each child's needs are understood and supported from the time they enter the Nursery. In the Reception class, the activities build on the Nursery experience. Opportunities to extend children's skills in literacy and mathematics are enhanced through activities that reinforce key learning and extend experiences into other aspects of the curriculum. However, opportunities to extend this learning still further are limited due to the lack of well resourced outdoor provision. Learning journals provide a very effective record of each child's development and exemplify the care and attention that is given to all children.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide well resourced outside provision for the Reception classes to improve learning opportunities in all areas of the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils achieve as well as they can. The school ensures this by making very good use of the detailed information it collects about the progress of each pupil. Work is set that really moves each pupil on. Very effective provision is made to support those found not to be making expected progress and enable them to regain momentum in their learning. Pupils' progress accelerates in Key Stage 1 and standards overall in reading, writing and mathematics are average by the end of Year 2. Overall standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave. In 2007, challenging targets were met in English and science and were just missed in mathematics. Progress and standards in mathematics have since improved as a result of the reorganisation of teaching groups. Highly effective support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to join in fully in class activities and make significant progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

'No matter what happens in this school, you are treated fairly'. This statement from a pupil reflects the attitude of most. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils feel safe, confident and capable of, as they put it, 'reaching our potential'. Pupils' love of their school and teachers, who make learning interesting and fun, shows in their good, and continually improving, attendance. They respond very well to the many opportunities to take on responsibility around school or in the community such as becoming school council members or active members of the Allotment Committee. Their views on making the school better are taken into account. Outstanding

provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development shines through in the happiness that pupils show at being in school and the care and courtesy with which they treat each other and visitors. Their awareness of other cultures is impressive. Through the use of ICT, they are in regular contact with children in Germany and Poland. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers create an excellent working atmosphere and make very clear what pupils are expected to achieve. Questioning is excellent and cleverly used to involve pupils in their learning. Activities engage pupils so that they work hard and enjoy their work. Excellent ICT resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used very well to help to motivate pupils. Teachers make very good use of marking to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. The excellent use of praise motivates pupils to try really hard. Teachers use tracking information very well to plan the next steps. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets. They, therefore, have clear views of how they might improve. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively in partnership to ensure that all pupils who need extra help receive very good support.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum makes a major contribution to pupils' personal development. Opportunities to develop an understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy and make a positive contribution to society are evident throughout the learning opportunities. The highly effective links made between subjects strengthen the quality of the curriculum and make it far more meaningful to pupils. As a result, the pupils, and in particular boys, are more engaged with their learning. The school has achieved many awards and the displays of exciting art work, interesting humanities projects and exceptional ICT work show just why they are well deserved. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding. Regular visits, visitors into school and residential enrich this already exciting curriculum and make the school a place where pupils really do want to be. The 'enrichment afternoon' is a particularly important feature of this provision and enables all pupils to have new and different experiences. Within the curriculum there is provision very well tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

This is an extremely safe, supportive and inclusive school, where pupils receive outstanding care and guidance. Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough, all staff share a full understanding of child protection issues, health and safety checks are conscientious and all potential risks assessed. Nothing is allowed to impede the school's commitment to making sure pupils get the very best start in their school life. 'The school does everything it can to help everyone', is a typical comment from the overwhelmingly supportive views of parents. Pupils especially value their access to the learning mentors in school. Their work on attendance and behavioural issues has had a positive impact on learning and personal development of the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils' academic progress is tracked very carefully and effectively to guide pupils' future learning and bring in support where it is necessary. Assessment information is

used exceptionally well to plan challenging tasks and plan for future progress. Pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work and pleased with how well they are doing because of this; as one remarked to the inspectors, 'our levels have gone up loads, so we know we have a better chance at secondary school'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The very strong leadership and management team are confident, support each other and share a clear focus on continuous improvement. The mission statement, 'open minds, unlock potential, celebrate success', reflects accurately the attitude to leadership and management in this school. All views are respected, creative thinking is explored and the drive for excellence is central to its life. The headteacher's leadership is inspirational and is the key feature of leadership and management that is outstanding overall. Excellent support has boosted the confidence of staff and all make a strong contribution to the school's success. Governors understand their role and responsibilities and are very effective. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection because this is a school that always wants to improve and does!

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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?	1
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?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### 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	2
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?	1
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>	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**

Inspection of Whitehill Primary School, Halifax, HX2 9RL

What a wonderful school you attend! I am writing to you to thank you for your help during my inspection of your school and to share with you my opinions about it. I agree with the school that it is outstanding. I was very impressed by how friendly and polite you are, not just with me, but most importantly with each other. You behave very well and you work hard and try your best in lessons. I enjoyed seeing you take part in the circus activities and listening to you sing so very well in the Key Stage 2 Thursday assembly.

The children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to school life. However, I have asked the school to ensure that children in the Reception age group have their own outside area where they can develop their skills further. Throughout the rest of the school you all achieve outstandingly well. It was really good to see you use your ICT skills so well to help further your learning.

I agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. All the jobs you do in school and the many activities pupils are involved in are certainly helping you to become very good citizens of the future. It is good to see that you know what you need to do to be safe and keep healthy and fit.

Your school provides all of you with a very caring place to learn. You are given lots of help by teachers and teaching assistants and you therefore feel safe and secure at all times.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.