

Whiteknights Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109839
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310118
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Daniel Kilborn

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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Bayes
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Daniels
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Fairlawn Green Shinfield Rise Reading RG2 8EP
Telephone number	01189 872588
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average and serves an increasingly diverse community with over thirty languages represented. About a third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds mainly from the African and Asian continents and Central Europe. A few pupils from the ethnic minority backgrounds are at early stages of learning English (EAL). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. The majority of these need additional support with reading, writing and mathematics in lessons. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved the Activemark, Healthy Schools and Bronze Eco awards.

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. It is popular and highly regarded by the vast majority of parents. As one parent commented, 'Whiteknights is a good, well run school by a teaching staff continually looking to improve'. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their good behaviour and attitudes and their willingness to learn. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and they demonstrate a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and to keep safe. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. The skills they learn help them to prepare well for the future.

Effective leadership and management are fundamental to the good progress pupils are making by the time they leave the school. The headteacher provides outstanding and inspirational leadership and has successfully built a strong team committed to raising achievement and standards. She is well supported by senior managers and a well informed governing body. They share her enthusiasm and determination for school improvement. The maintainance of high standards and achievement over time, mostly effective teaching, and recent improvements, demonstrate good capacity for improvement. The bursar and administrative staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and consistently good or outstanding in Years 5 and 6. The school has identified the need to ensure more teaching is of this high quality. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always matched at the right level for pupils. This results in work that is either too easy or too hard, so pupils' progress slows. All adults who work in the school are committed to professional development and staff morale is high. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' involvement in learning. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make good progress.

The school sets realistic and challenging targets that are grounded in accurate analyses of pupils' progress. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards overall are above average. Achievement is good overall and is outstanding in English. For example, last year's test results showed that pupils in Year 6 made above average rates of progress in English. This placed the school in the top ten percent of schools nationally. Although standards were below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 last year, the pupils made satisfactory rates of progress in relation to their starting points. The school has introduced a range of initiatives in reading, writing and mathematics which has led to an improvement in standards for the current Year 2.

There is a good curriculum with a wide range of opportunities for enrichment. Care, guidance and support are good. This is reflected in the good relationships at all levels and in the commitment of all adults to the well-being of the pupils. A parent's comment, typical of many received, was, 'A school at which our child is very happy'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children join the Reception classes with language and mathematical skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress but the good teaching cannot fully compensate for this and in these areas of learning, a small minority does not reach all the expectations for children entering Year 1. Children enjoy the good curriculum. It is well planned and has an

effective balance of adult led and free play activities using the well-resourced inside and outside accommodation well. Teachers plan stimulating tasks and activities for the children which incorporate strong links between subjects, provide a strong base for future learning and encourage independence. Early speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught well. Staff value all children as unique and diversity is respected and celebrated. Children learning English as an additional language are supported well and paired with a child who speaks English as a role model. This enables them to make good progress. There is sensitive individual support for children with learning difficulties and they progress well. Assessment systems are satisfactory but the staff do not yet incorporate observations of the children's progress and performance in free choice activities to help them plan work that matches the needs of all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Build on the good practice seen across the school to improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been below average for the past four years and achievement during this time has been satisfactory. Indicative results from the 2008 assessments show improvement so the rate of progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 is increasing. This reflects improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement for pupils by the end of Year 6 has been consistently good for the past four years and well above average. Standards are high in English and pupils make outstanding progress. This is the result of consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching, particularly towards the end of the key stage. Indicative results and inspection evidence for the current Year 6 pupils show that they are on course to meet their challenging targets and maintain above average standards. Some high quality work was seen in information and communication technology (ICT), music and art across the school and pupils achieve well in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is broadly average. They flourish in an environment where courtesy, good behaviour and hard work are rewarded. There are fair and consistently applied sanctions if pupils misbehave. As a result, they are friendly, confident and appreciative of the staff and each other. One pupil commented, 'It's not just boring work - the teachers make it really fun!' Pupils assume responsibility readily, even the very youngest, and cheerfully undertake a wide range of roles such as playground monitors and librarians. Pupils who are new to the school say how quickly they make friends. For example, Reception class children were seen to give a warm and informed welcome to new entrants. The school council plays a large part in contributing to school life and introducing learners to the principles of democracy. Racial harmony is strong. Pupils' awareness of different cultures and communities is developed well through studies of other countries and work in music and art. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is mostly good teaching across the school. However, teaching is most effective towards the end of Key Stage 2 where it is consistently strong and sometimes outstanding. This helps pupils make particularly rapid progress, develop an excellent work ethic and attain high standards. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were taught to think as mathematicians when solving a challenging problem. All the pupils improved their skills quickly, there was an excited buzz and high levels of engagement. Relationships are good throughout the school and teachers are enthusiastic and hard working. They reward positive attitudes and deal constructively with the few pupils who occasionally struggle to live up to the good standard of behaviour achieved by the large majority of their fellow pupils. Information and communication technology supports learning well in all lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to supporting the successful integration of pupils with LDD so that they make good progress. This is also true of pupils in the early stages of learning English. Assessment systems and the tracking of pupils' progress are good. A small minority of the teaching is satisfactory. This is largely because day-to-day assessment is not used effectively to plan work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils. As a result, there are not the exciting and stimulating activities seen in the good lessons and the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. The sharp focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT helps pupils develop skills that prepare them well for the next stage of learning. The curriculum is constantly under review and over the past year there has been a move to link learning across subjects more. This, although not yet fully embedded across the school, is adding more creativity and relevance to learning. The curriculum is enriched by a wide and interesting range of extra-curricular activities, including French, sport and the arts. Visits and visitors from the community add a further interesting and relevant dimension to learning. There is good emphasis on environmental issues. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils' increasingly well. In Year 1, teachers' planning has been adapted to ensure that there is smooth transition from the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because teachers offer good guidance, although the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Individual target setting is used effectively to raise standards. The recently introduced 'Golden Rules' system of rewards and sanctions, effectively supports and promotes good behaviour. This is appreciated by the pupils, who recognise it is having a beneficial impact on behaviour in lessons. Regular and well-informed assessment prompts a good level of extra support when required. The provision for pupils with LDD and EAL is effective and this results in good progress. Appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils. Staff training reinforces an informed approach to child protection and the school works well with a range of outside agencies. Due care is taken to advise learners of potential hazards in computer use. Drugs awareness and sex education are covered at levels appropriate to the age of the learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is an outstanding leader who inspires others by her commitment and drive to improve all aspects of pupils' learning. The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents. As one parent commented, 'The headteacher is an excellent leader and has an enthusiastic team of staff behind her'. The senior managers share the headteacher's determination and vision and have been empowered to develop their roles more effectively. A good school improvement plan points a clear and appropriate way forward and sets the right priorities to raise achievement and standards still further. Self-evaluation is good and based securely upon detailed tracking and data analysis. This is helping to raise standards by targeting additional support appropriately. As a result, pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 have been maintained well and are above national averages. The leadership have taken effective action to improve standards by the end of Year 2 by adapting the curriculum and introducing new schemes of work. This is beginning to improve standards in Years 1 and 2. Careful monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers is improving teaching but still needs to ensure that all the teaching is at least good. Governance is good and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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?	2
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 ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	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?	2
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?	2
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	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

14 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whiteknights Primary School, Reading, RG2 8EP

Thank you for the very friendly welcome the inspectors received during our recent visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. Your school is improving well and is providing you with a good education. With your help, we are sure that the headteacher and all the staff in the school will continue to make your school even better.

We were impressed with your good attitudes to work and how well most of you get on together. We would like to thank the school council for sharing their views with us and were pleased to see how many of you take responsibility as class monitors, library supervisors and as playground helpers. The school grounds and environmental areas are superb and we know you use these well to help you in your science work and to become more aware of the environment.

You work hard in your lessons and the teachers make most of these interesting, challenging and enjoyable. We have asked your headteacher to make sure all your lessons are like this. You are doing very well in English, mathematics, art, music and singing and we saw good examples. We think that some younger children could do better in their reading, writing and mathematics.

We know that your teachers and visitors to school teach you about healthy eating, keeping safe and the importance of taking regular exercise. You tell us there is always an adult to help you if you have any concerns. We think the school provides you with good opportunities to take part in out of school activities.

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and we wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Kilborn

Lead Inspector