

Whirley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111153
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310519
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Geoff Lawrence

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Brocklehurst
Headteacher	Mr John Rowan
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Whirley Road Broken Cross Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 3JL
Telephone number	01625 611399
Fax number	01625 610248

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Inspection number	310519

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average in size. It serves an area with a mixture of owner-occupier, rented and rural properties with above average social and economic circumstances. Eligibility for free school meals is much lower than usual. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school holds the following awards: Activemark, Investors in People and Healthy Schools Award.

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 promotes pupils' personal development outstandingly. This contributes significantly to their good academic progress and to equipping pupils with effective basic skills to use in the future.

Good links with the community and other partners ensure that all pupils are cared for well and learning is very successfully promoted. Parents are very appreciative of this and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many endorse the comment, 'The school's culture and approach encourages learning.'

Staff work successfully to develop pupils' self-esteem well so that they become confident learners. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. They show increasing maturity as they go through the school and their behaviour is excellent. The school has created an attractive and stimulating learning environment in which pupils are happy and know how to stay safe and healthy. They carry out a range of responsibilities confidently and willingly. They are pleased that their views are taken into account, especially those made by the very active and influential school council.

Pupils' performance is carefully tracked and different ability groups are set targets. However, the targets set tend to be too general rather than specifically aimed at individual pupils' needs. This makes it more difficult for teachers, when they mark pupils' work, to identify the exact improvements pupils need to make.

Throughout Years 1 to 6, good teaching and an enriched curriculum stimulates pupils' interest. They say they enjoy lessons because 'they are fun so you don't get bored'. This encourages them to work hard, develop an enthusiasm for learning and make good progress as they move up the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their individual education plans include specific targets to help them to improve. Pupils who are more able, however, are not always challenged sufficiently by the work they are set. This results in them not always making the progress of which they are capable. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above national averages. Given their attainment on entry to the school, this represents good achievement for most pupils.

Good leadership and management are a major factor in pupils' good progress. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. He is an excellent role model for staff and gives a very clear educational direction for the school that has resulted in good improvements since the last inspection. Staff are well motivated and share his commitment to providing a high quality education for pupils. They have readily taken on recently reassigned responsibilities and are developing well in their roles.

The school evaluates its performance regularly and accurately. This enables it to identify areas for improvement correctly. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage, which they enter with skills and knowledge generally in line with those typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 almost all children reach the targets set for them nationally

in all areas of their learning. Their good personal, social and emotional provision enables children to develop positive attitudes and helps them settle quickly. They enjoy coming to school and behave well. Although children's progress is satisfactory overall, it varies considerably. Small group activities or whole-class lessons are often more effective, than the sessions where children choose their own activities. This means their progress slows because these are insufficiently well planned to extend children's skills and promote their independence. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school recognises the need to develop a less formal curriculum and to ensure more opportunities for children to learn outside. Assessment systems are satisfactory and adults' closer observations of children are beginning to contribute to the overall picture of their development and achievement. Partnerships with parents are strong and many support their children's learning by helping in the classroom or by hearing their children read at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage so that children have more access to and learn more from those activities they choose themselves.
- Ensure that all the work set for the more able pupils is suitably challenging.
- Set pupils individual targets and ensure that teachers use these when they mark work in order to help pupils better understand what they need to do to achieve them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Recent test results show that the previous years' decline in standards at end of Key Stage 1 have been reversed with a notable improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. This has been in response to specific action taken by the school to raise standards in English. Pupils continue to achieve well throughout Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, they consistently achieve above average standards in mathematics, English and science. In spite of these above average standards, more needs to be done to help the more able pupils to achieve the higher levels in both key stages. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well because they are provided with good support in the classroom and in small groups. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for the coming year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Throughout their time at school, pupils make outstanding progress in developing their personal skills and attributes. They clearly enjoy coming to school as evidenced by their excellent attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. High quality relationships are formed. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social development is outstanding as is their appreciation of other cultures and religions. They know how to stay safe and have a thorough understanding of healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in the choices they make at lunchtime and the high numbers that enthusiastically take part in the many sporting activities on offer. Pupils have a voice in school and they speak enthusiastically and articulately about how they have contributed to improving the school. They understand their responsibilities to each other in school and in the wider community and enjoy raising funds for several charities. They acquire effective life skills to help them to develop into thoughtful and mature young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons move along at a good pace and teachers make work interesting. For example, in separate mathematics lessons one class was observed using the data generated by European football championship 2008, while another was using information about school lunches to compile graphs. This approach, along with their confident use of information and communication technology (ICT), helps to capture pupils' interest and contributes to the good progress they make in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain the purpose of lessons clearly so that pupils understand what they will learn. Teachers establish excellent relationships with pupils and promote pupils' personal development well so that they become more confident and have excellent attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help them to make good progress. Teachers plan lessons conscientiously, but do not give enough attention to ensuring that the more able pupils are suitably challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of learners well. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, science and ICT skills. The school now ensures that pupils have many opportunities to write in a range of subjects, which has contributed significantly to higher standards in English, particularly in Key Stage 1. The curriculum does not always challenge the most able. There is a very good programme for pupils' personal, social and health education which plays a crucial part in promoting their outstanding personal development. Their excellent understanding of other cultures and religions is enhanced through assemblies and themed projects such as 'Global Village Week.' The good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including specific support programmes, enables them to achieve well. Pupils say that the extensive use of ICT has made lessons more enjoyable and interesting. They also benefit from an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school activities which are offered across the school to allow pupils to pursue a variety of sporting, creative and other interests. The school makes work relevant for pupils by incorporating a range of visits and visitors into the topics they study.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported. Procedures for health and safety, risk assessment and first aid are in place. Pupils say they feel happy and secure in school, which enables them to make good progress and enjoy school. Effective systems ensure pupils' excellent behaviour, attendance and punctuality, which are considerable strengths in their personal development. Procedures to check on pupils' progress, so that teachers can set more appropriate work in lessons, are well established, but are not yet fully effective for the more able pupils. The achievements of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are tracked carefully and these are supported very well. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to help these pupils develop effective academic skills and increased personal confidence. Pupils have some understanding of their group targets and are beginning to be involved in assessing

their own work, but currently too few pupils understand fully what they have to do to reach these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and other senior leaders have contributed very effectively to raising standards by accurately identifying areas for improvement and taking swift action. For example, improvements made to ICT provision have had a significant impact both on teaching and learning and on pupils' enjoyment of school. The senior leadership team has skills that complement each other and the team has a clear focus on school improvement. The headteacher is committed to and has been very successful in developing leaders and, as a result, staff are highly motivated. Subject leaders are developing well in their roles. However, the school recognises that they do not currently make full use of the information gained from lesson observations and from assessment data in order to fully promote pupils' progress. Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive yet challenging. Resources are well managed and reviewed regularly. The school complies with the latest requirements to safeguard children. Effective improvements since the last inspection indicate a good capacity to improve.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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?	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	1
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	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	2
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

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

Inspection of Whirley Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 3JL

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us feel so welcome during the recent inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you work. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and how friendly, polite and helpful you were. In fact, we thought you were very mature and sensible. We were particularly impressed with the work of the school council and how you have all been involved in making decisions about how your school can improve. We thought your choice of the football cage in the playground was excellent. We noticed that you made good use of it too. We were pleased to hear you tell us about the many things that you enjoy in school. These are some of the other things that we thought were good about your school.

- Adults in school work hard and make sure that you are safe, well cared for and happy and that you make good progress.
- You get on well together and have excellent attendance.
- There are interesting things for you to do, including after-school clubs.
- You understand the importance of healthy eating and taking lots of exercise.

You go to a good school that is excellent in helping you to become outstanding young people. However, there are some things the school needs to do to make it even better. The teachers need to make sure that the work you are set makes you think really hard so that you do as well as you should, especially those of you who find some of the work a bit too easy. We have asked that the teachers also make sure that the targets you are set make it clear to each of you what you need to do to improve. We have also asked your teachers to make comments when they mark your work to help you understand how to reach those targets. Children in Reception need more help with learning when they are working individually on something they have chosen for themselves.

Thank you once again for helping us. We enjoyed our two days with you and we hope that you continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Best wishes to you all and enjoy your summer holiday.