

Whitchurch Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113267
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311183
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Sainsbury
Headteacher	Angela O'shea-Warman
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	School Road Whitchurch Tavistock PL19 9SR
Telephone number	01822 616202
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: attainment and achievement, especially in mathematics and science, the impact of staffing changes and the move to a more distributive form of leadership, and the impact of the deficit budget. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The intake of this school has changed over recent years. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen and is now above average. There are two intakes each year in September and January. Attainment on entry varies between the two intakes but is often below that expected, for example, personal development and boys' communication, language and literacy skills are often below that expected. Almost all pupils are of White British origin with a very small minority from other ethnic groups. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language

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 that has robust and effective procedures for looking at itself and identifying ways of improving. The strong leadership of the headteacher has enabled the school to develop over recent years into a 'learning community' where teachers and pupils learn together. For example, teachers are learning musical instruments alongside pupils in after school clubs. This happy and harmonious community does particularly well in developing pupils' personal and social skills. This is appreciated by most parents, as is evident in comments such as, 'Whitchurch school is a warm, caring environment and treats every child as an important individual.' Achievement has improved and is now good because the school has focused on developing the pupils' learning skills and introduced good ways of checking on how well they are doing. The school identified inconsistencies in the teaching of pupils in the transition from KS1 to KS2 a few years ago which limited progress in Year 3 and 4. Effective action was taken to address this issue. A greater emphasis on developing learning skills and improving pupils' vocabulary through the good use of drama has improved their speaking and listening skills. This has contributed to a rise in standards in writing, especially for boys. A focus on using correct mathematical and scientific vocabulary has improved achievement in these subjects, although this has not yet impacted on standards at the end of Year 6. The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they achieve well and attain skills above those normally expected. Standards are average overall. There has been an improvement over the past two years, but there is some variation in different subjects. Standards in English are now above average as a result of the intensive work to improve pupils' skills in writing. While there has also been improvement in standards in science and mathematics, this is more evident for pupils in Years 1 to 5 than it is in Year 6. These pupils did not make the progress they should have made in Year 3&4. While they have made up lost ground at a good rate, standards in mathematics and science in Year 6 are still broadly average. Whilst almost all pupils are now attaining expected standards, the more able are not always reaching the higher levels in these subjects. Pupils' personal development is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect upon their feelings and develop a respect for themselves and others. As a result, their spiritual development is particularly good. Pupils are caring and considerate to one another, helping each other whenever possible. Pupils say that they enjoy school and attendance is above average. Behaviour is good. Pupils know how to stay safe, for example, when using tools in design and technology. They say that they feel safe, that bullying is not a problem and teachers deal effectively with the few instances that occur. Pupils know the importance of eating healthily and staying fit, as recognised by the Active School Gold award. Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school and in doing so gain valuable skills that help them prepare for their future economic well-being. Pupils appreciate the good teaching and speak highly of the help that they get from teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that the needs of most pupils are met, although planning in mathematics and science does not always include enough challenge for more able pupils. Good quality questioning encourages pupils to think and reflect. A particularly good feature of the marking in English is the focus on how well pupils are achieving their targets and the guidance given to them on how to do better. Pupils say that they find this a useful way of knowing what they need to do to improve. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support that enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. Good partnerships with universities enable the school to make good use of trainee teachers to support pupils' learning. The good curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the way that teachers make learning interesting and

fun. They are keen to take part in the wide and interesting range of activities. Pupils respond particularly well to the opportunities for art, music and physical education and do particularly well in these subjects. The school has rightly identified that there is scope to further boost standards in science throughout the school by providing more opportunities to develop pupils' investigative skills. Care, support and guidance are good. Pastoral care is very good. The school has robust procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Good systems for checking on how well pupils are doing are used well to plan support for most pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has recognised that the use of this information to stretch more able pupils in mathematics and science, especially in Years 5 and 6, is not effective enough. Leadership and management are good. The changes to a more shared method of leadership have proved effective. All subject leaders feel that they are part of a team that works closely with the headteacher and governors to identify ways in which the school can improve. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, although senior managers recognise that minor refinements to the way assessment information is presented would enable a better overview of whole-school performance. Good management by governors has ensured that the school has improved despite the deficit budget. Much of the recent improvement, for example, in science, has been supported by funds raised through groups such as the Whitchurch School Association. Governors work hard to reduce the impact of the deficit budget. They are understandably concerned that they are not in a position to fund initiatives properly, for example, by employing extra staff to release teachers for planning, preparation and assessment time. While there is no evidence that this is currently impacting on pupils' learning, the situation is being closely monitored. Despite the constraints of the budget, the school is moving forward. Given the recent improvements in pupils' achievement and the rise in standards in English, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The rich and stimulating environment and good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that children get a very good start. Adults are sensitive to the needs of the children and skilled at meeting these. Detailed and rigorous assessment of children ensures that activities are matched well to the needs of individuals. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early through these procedures and through home visits before children start school. They are given additional support as soon as possible. The good links established with Year 1 ensure that this support continues. A key strength of the Foundation Stage is the way in which children's social skills are developed and they are prepared for learning when they enter Year 1. Children are motivated to learn and all engage in activities. They develop confidence as learners and are eager to talk about what they are doing. This helps them with their early writing skills. The good teaching ensures that children make good progress, especially in their personal development, to achieve above the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. The school has accurately identified scope to build upon the significant strengths in the Foundation Stage through developing the area for outdoor play and strengthening the links with pre-school.

What the school should do to improve further

- provide more challenge to more able pupils in mathematics and science so that they achieve as well as they can
- improve pupils' investigative skills in science by providing more opportunities for them to plan and organise a range of tests and experiments.

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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	3
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	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- 23 November 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Whitchurch Community Primary School, Tavistock, PL19 9SR Thank you for your help when I came to visit. You helped me find out a lot about the school. Some of the things that I liked are the following:
 - Yours is a good school where everybody, including teachers, learns together.
 - Your standards in English are better than in most schools.
 - You are making good progress in your learning and standards are getting better, especially in writing and science.
 - You told me that you enjoy school because the teachers make learning interesting. I agree. I think that the teaching is good and the school gives you a lot of interesting things to do, especially in after school clubs.
 - You know how to stay safe, eat healthily and keep fit.
 - You do a lot of things to help around the school, such as helping younger children at playtimes and making suggestions through the school council.
 - Your school is as good as it is because the leadership and management are good. All teachers and governors are working together well to make the school even better.
 - The school is good at finding how what helps you learn. I was particularly impressed with all the role play and drama work that you do. This is really helping your vocabulary and this helps you write better. To help you learn even better, I have asked the school to:
 - Provide more challenge in mathematics and science for those of you who can work at an even higher level. You can help by telling your teachers when you find work too easy.
 - Help you develop better investigation skills in science by giving you more opportunities to plan and organise tests and experiments. Thank you again for your help Yours sincerely
Stephen Lake Lead inspector



23 November 2007

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PL19 9SR**

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- Help you develop better investigation skills in science by giving you more opportunities to plan and organise tests and experiments.

Thank you again for your help

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
Lead inspector