

Whiteshill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115556
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311976
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	89
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	15
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Smith
Headteacher	Robert Kempner
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Road Whiteshill Stroud GL6 6AS
Telephone number	01453 762949
Fax number	01453 762949

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The achievement of pupils across the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

How well assessment is used across the whole school to improve achievement and set targets, especially for older pupils.

How good the outdoor element of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is and how it affects achievement, especially that of boys.

Evidence was gathered from:

discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, pupils and staff

visits to classes

scrutiny of pupils' work

observation of other aspects of the school day such as break time

analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress.

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

This is smaller than average school, with most of the pupils coming from the surrounding area. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) in the Reception class. Fewer pupils than average are from minority ethnic groups and no pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals is below average. A below average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is average. The majority of these pupils have speech and language problems; some have specific learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural problems and some are on the autistic spectrum. The school has been through a disturbed few months as old classrooms were replaced with temporary buildings. The school has recently gained 'Healthy School' status and has also been awarded 'Artsmark Gold'. The cohort varies considerably from year to year and this causes variation in results.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whiteshill Primary is a good school and provides a good standard of education. The school has improved well since the last inspection, raising standards in all subjects, especially English. Changes have been made to the environment and curriculum to provide a high quality learning experience that motivates and stimulates pupils. Most parents greatly appreciate the way the school has improved over the last few years, especially the changes to the curriculum. As one of the many who wrote in support of the school said, 'Whiteshill is a great school – helping children to access the curriculum in a lively and interesting way.'

Achievement is good. From starting points on entry to the school that are in line with typical expectations, pupils achieve well to attain above average standards by Year 6. Progress in the EYFS is good and children start Year 1 with above average skills in most areas. Standards of attainment have been rising steadily over the last three years. By the end of Year 2, standards are now well above average, although standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics. The improvement is also working through Key Stage 2, although it will be several years before the full impact is seen in the standards at the end of Year 6. Currently, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average owing to the exceptionally high standards in English. The school has improved achievement in English because the good use of information gained from assessments has helped teachers to set appropriately challenging and realistic targets. Although the school is extending these assessment systems to support pupils in mathematics, this is not yet complete. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and standards are average. Pupils' above average standards combined with their very good information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

The school cares for the pupils well and works closely with outside agencies to support any vulnerable pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from capable teaching assistants that enables them to make the same progress as other pupils. New systems for checking on the progress of pupils in English are rigorous and effective. The information gained is used well to set challenging targets for pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, although this is not yet consistent throughout the school. Pupils appreciate the individual targets set for them in English and say that these help them understand what it is they have to learn. Challenging school targets are set in mathematics and the school achieved these last year, but individual targets are not clear enough to the pupils. This is a key reason why achievement in mathematics is not as good as in English.

Pupils make good progress because of good teaching and the good quality curriculum. Teachers know what they expect pupils to learn, and their clear explanations make pupils confident about tackling their work. Teachers know how to motivate and stimulate pupils to learn, making good use all available aspects of information and communication technology to make lessons interesting. Pupils have good access to computers and are confident in using them to support their learning. Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend opportunities for learning. The Forest School facility is used well to stimulate learning, especially that of boys, and pupils really enjoy the exciting environment that it provides. Detailed marking in English gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work. This is not the case in mathematics. The school recognises that marking in mathematics does not always provide enough guidance to pupils on how they can do better. In addition, information on how well pupils are doing is not used consistently in mathematics to match work to the needs of the pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. The good quality curriculum provides many opportunities to support this important aspect of pupils' education. Pupils say that they enjoy school and are keen to attend. The very good guidance that they receive on how to behave and look after themselves means that behaviour is excellent and pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. The good provision for health education in the curriculum and the very good guidance in this area ensure that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They eat healthy snacks and participate eagerly in the opportunities for sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, although their cultural development is only satisfactory as they do not have a good enough awareness of the rich diversity of cultures found in Britain. This limits the opportunities for developing skills that encourage community cohesion. Nevertheless, pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community through responsibilities such as the school council and involvement in local sports and music events.

Leadership and management are good. All senior staff are involved in checking what works well and what needs improving. Consequently, the school has a good understanding of most of its own strengths and weaknesses. The school has identified the need to use the information on how well pupils are doing more effectively in setting targets and has already introduced this in English. However, this same information is not used sufficiently well to help provide an overview of school performance from year to year, nor is it shared effectively enough with governors. This makes it difficult for governors to question how well the school is doing. A consequence of this is that their monitoring of the school's performance is not as effective as it might be. Nevertheless, governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school well. They have established effective systems for checking on other aspects of school life. Governors visit the school regularly and report back on what they have found. This provides good quality information on the curriculum and pupils' personal development. In partnership with the local authority, the governors have overseen the replacement of all classes with good quality mobile classrooms and have worked hard with the head to minimise the disruption to pupils' education whilst this took place. The recent improvements made in the school and the school's awareness of what needs to be improved mean that the capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Overall, provision is good. The vast majority of children reach above expected standards at the end of the EYFS in most areas of learning, especially in creative development and mathematics. This represents good achievement from children's attainment on entry. The EYFS is well led and managed. All areas of learning are covered well and there is a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Nevertheless, the recent building alterations mean that children do not have enough opportunities to learn outdoors. They make use of the Forest School once a week but the school has recognised that this is not enough, and development of the outdoor area is a priority in the school development plan.

Teaching in the EYFS is good and ensures good learning. All children behave well and most appear to enjoy their learning. Close liaison with the nearby playgroup staff and positive relationships with parents mean that children settle quickly and happily. Their personal development is good, they display positive attitudes and they learn to relate well with others. The care provided by adults is good and helps children to feel secure and confident. One parent commented, 'As a new parent, I have been so impressed by the level of care and consultation

already undertaken by the school.' A strength of the Foundation Stage staff is the way all adults are particularly effective in promoting children's language skills, ensuring children start Year 1 well prepared for learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the information on how well pupils are doing is used more effectively to set targets in mathematics in order to improve achievement.
- Use assessment information more effectively to provide governors with a better overview of how well the school is doing so they are able to monitor the school's performance more accurately.
- As a matter of urgency, improve the range and accessibility of outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of cultures to be found in Britain.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

24 September 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Whiteshill Primary School, Stroud GL6 6AS

Thank you for making us welcome and giving us a lot of help in finding out about your school. Here are some of the things that we found out.

- Yours is a good school where you are learning well, right from the time you start in the Foundation Stage.
- Your standards are better than in most schools, especially at age seven and in English at age eleven, where they are very much better.
- You are making good progress in your learning and standards are getting better all the time.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You told me that you really enjoy school because the teachers make learning interesting. I agree; we found that the teaching is good.
- You know how to stay safe, eat healthily and keep fit because the curriculum gives you many opportunities to learn about this and take part in sport.
- Your school is as good as it is because the leadership and management are good.

To help make your school even better I have asked it to do just a few things:-

- To use the information they have on how well you do better, to help you improve your achievement in mathematics, and to help the senior staff and governors judge how well the whole school is doing. You can help by telling your teachers when you find work too easy.
- To provide ways for those of you in the Reception Class to have more time outdoors.
- To help you understand better about all the different types of people and cultures to be found in Britain.

Thank you again for all your help and the polite way you helped us find out all these things.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Lake Lead inspector