

Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119478
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313310
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr John Walker
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Berryman
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Preston Road Whittle-le-Woods Chorley Lancashire PR6 7PS
Telephone number	01257 262732
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, especially in English and for the more able, the quality of teaching and learning with a focus on English; pupils' attitudes and behaviour; the breadth of the curriculum in meeting all pupils' needs; enrichment activities and safety and safeguarding procedures. The quality and impact of leadership and management was also investigated, especially in the light of recent changes. Evidence was gathered from: observations, assessment data, records and documents, parents' replies to the questionnaires and discussions with staff, governors and pupils. 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 average sized school is situated in a residential semi-rural area. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but the numbers of pupils who have additional funding for special educational needs is above average.

The school provides after-school and breakfast clubs on the premises. There have been many changes to staffing recently. The headteacher was appointed this year and a temporary management team is in place.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary is a good school and provides good value for money. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Parents have very positive views of the school summed up by praise for the 'fantastic, nurturing environment' and the 'dedicated and committed staff'. Parents agree that they feel well informed and involved in their children's education. Links with the church, other schools and agencies are good and result in many benefits for pupils' learning. For example, a strong partnership with the local church promotes pupils' personal development and involvement in the community very well, and a sports partnership with a local school enhances provision for physical education. A strong sense of pride in the school is shared between adults and pupils.

Standards are significantly above average by Year 6 and pupils achieve well. They make good progress through Key Stage 1 and standards by the end of Year 2 are consistently, and significantly, above average. Although standards for Year 6 were high in 2007, there was a slight dip in progress in writing. Staff acted swiftly and adjusted the curriculum, teaching and tracking of pupils' progress. Current, reliable records show better progress this year with a very good proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 working at a high level. Pupils who have additional needs have good, sensitive support and achieve well from their starting points. Teachers have recently been successful in improving boys' writing so that they achieve as well as the girls.

Pupils learn well because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' work is assessed very regularly and tasks are well planned to cater for pupils' differing needs. Special booster programmes help pupils who are not meeting their teachers' expectations. This acts as a good safety net and is a major factor underpinning the pupils' good achievement. The more able often have additional challenge but there are occasions, in mathematics and science in particular, when they complete the same work as the majority. This slows their progress. Well trained teaching assistants guide and encourage pupils, thus enabling all to succeed. This was evident, for example, in art and design technology where work was of a very good standard. Teachers give good guidance for pupils through helpful comments in marking and targets which clearly indicate what needs improving. New systems encourage pupils to evaluate their own progress and develop their own goals. This works especially well in writing where pupils use their 'marking ladders' very effectively. It is not so well used across the younger age groups.

The very effective curriculum provides a balance in developing pupils' creative, practical and academic skills and includes French and German. Very good arrangements for pupils who have learning difficulties enables full access to the curriculum and ensures pupils' needs are met well. Visits and expert visitors enrich the curriculum and inject excitement into the learning. Curricular planning is currently being revised to provide more opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and engage in practical work. Some very worthwhile links are already evident, for example between science and design and technology. Others are at an early stage.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Attendance is excellent and punctuality is good, all of which aids pupils' learning very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding: it is supported extremely well by the school's Christian values, very strong links with the church and an extensive programme of personal education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is excellent. Throughout school, pupils are happy and confident learners because they have excellent, trusting relationships

with their teachers. Good attention is given to care and support. Safeguarding meets all requirements. As a result, pupils feel secure and say that adults in school are always on hand to 'sort things out'. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy living. They participate in a wide range of exercise and sporting activities and have many opportunities to learn about food and sensible diets. Pupils carry out a wide range of responsibilities within school. For example, the 'play pals' organise playground activities and peer mentors help out with small disputes. The elected school council represents pupils' interests well and has contributed fresh ideas for the redevelopment of the school grounds. These opportunities, together with a good level of basic skills, ensure that pupils are very well prepared for their future lives.

Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have very effective systems to monitor the school's work and set challenging targets. As a result, good improvements have been made this year in writing. The subject manager for English has a very secure overview of the subject and has successfully made key changes. The role of the other core subject leaders is not developed to the same extent, so some issues with teaching and learning of the more able have not been addressed in these subjects. The school has come through an unsettled time very well. During many changes to staff and management, strengths have been maintained and progress improved. The headteacher provides visionary leadership of good quality and has the confidence and respect of other staff, governors, parents and pupils. Teamwork is strong: everyone is committed to providing the best they can for pupils. Good governance underpins the leadership and management of the school very well. They keep a critical eye on provision and achievement and are actively involved in steering the school forwards. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the school with a very broad range of skills. Their development is mostly just above that typical for the age group. Good management and very good introduction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly. They make good progress and develop a broad foundation for their future education. This is because the quality of teaching is good. Staff carefully plan the next steps for each individual to build carefully on what has already been learnt. An improved emphasis on teaching sounds and letters is leading to some excellent progress in early reading and writing for the current group of pupils. Behaviour is excellent and children are very well versed in class routines. For example, they consult the 'picture timetable' and organise themselves accordingly. They thoroughly enjoy their work and collaborate well. Children enjoy a wide range of teacher-led tasks. Alongside these, independent learning is supported well through a very interesting and stimulating selection of activities which link work inside and outside. Great care is taken to meet the needs of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who do particularly well as a result. On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is higher than is typical for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure there is good challenge for the more able in every lesson so that all achieve their best.
- Develop the role of subject managers in mathematics and science so that the attainment of the more able can be better checked.

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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?	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	1

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**

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR6 7PS

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day and I appreciated all the help you gave me and the interesting conversations we had. In return, I would like to tell you what I found out.

Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary is a good school. Some of the main things that impressed me were your excellent behaviour and your friendliness. You get on very well together and take very good care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your school. I was sorry to miss all you Year 6 pupils who were enjoying a residential visit. I did take time to look at your books and I think you work very hard indeed.

Your council members ensure that all your views and opinions are known. Your ideas for the school grounds have made playtimes much better. I think you do an excellent job in raising money for charities, which shows that you care about those who are less fortunate in the world. The school is a safe and happy place. It is good to know that bullying does not happen. Well done for taking good advantage of the after-school clubs. Not only do they help you to keep fit but also help to develop your interests in areas like cooking, computer work and art. You told me that you like the changes made in school recently and I agree with the person who commented that 'the headteacher makes school exciting and fun'. Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school, especially the good progress you make and the good teaching.

You are keen to learn and make good progress. Well done, keep up the good work. Your teachers have been making tasks harder so you are making better progress. This is mostly working well but I have asked them to make sure that the faster learners have lots of good challenges in all lessons so they have to think extra hard. I have also asked the teachers in charge of mathematics and science to come and see your lessons, as happens now in English.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations I had and for letting me share your day. There is a great deal about your school of which you and the staff can be proud. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector