

# Whitgreave Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124082
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314798
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frances Gillam

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Dunn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemary Pitcher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	The Avenue Featherstone Wolverhampton WV10 7AS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 734167
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 727502

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Whitgreave is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that of most schools. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The school has support from an associate headteacher who will be the new headteacher from January 2008. At the time of the inspection, there was an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2 and in the overall quality of teaching. Though senior managers and governors believe the school to be better and judge it as satisfactory, their evaluations and priorities for improvement show they have a very clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. Action to bring about change for the better has been slower than expected but the strong focus on raising standards is now showing signs of success. Improvements in areas such as reading and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and in pupils' attendance show the school has the necessary capacity to improve. Senior managers are teasing out robustly the causes of underachievement but they acknowledge they are yet to be fully successful in ironing out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are inadequate overall. This is because too many pupils underachieve in Years 1 and 2. Too frequently, teachers in these year groups do not use assessment information well enough to plan tasks that fully challenge the more able pupils and support those who may be experiencing difficulties with their work.

In spite of the underachievement in Years 1 and 2, some good aspects of teaching in the older year groups lead to average standards by Year 6. Furthermore, good provision in the Foundation Stage provides a positive start to school. Activities are lively and stimulating and children are keen learners. Taking their time in the school as a whole, many pupils make satisfactory progress, but a significant number do not meet targets that are sufficiently challenging, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Moreover, pupils could be doing better in writing. This is because action to improve pupils' achievements in writing has only started recently to have a positive impact. Opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and use their writing skills across the curriculum are increasing but senior managers acknowledge that further work is required to ensure consistency in the quality of these opportunities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and the care, guidance and support they receive are satisfactory. Parents are pleased with the level of care their children receive and pupils say they feel safe and free from harm. Pupils act safely and take good care of themselves and others. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of relevant experiences for pupils. Exciting trips and interesting activities, outside normal lessons, enrich pupils' learning and contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. These activities are supporting improvements in writing, particularly as pupils like the opportunities to write about things they have experienced and enjoyed. Though pupils are aware of the need for a healthy diet, not all make sensible choices about what they eat. Pupils have a good sense of community. They support local events and contribute to making their school a better place. They raise funds for charity because they recognise there are others less fortunate than themselves.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children do well in the Foundation Stage. Their attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly as expected. They settle quickly because staff pay good attention to the children's personal,

social and emotional needs. By the time, children are ready to move into Year 1 most reach or exceed the goals expected for their age and they make good progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan activities that enable pupils in Years 1 and 2 to do the best they can.
- Provide better opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do well enough and standards by Year 2 have fallen in the last two years to below average. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers in these year groups have low expectations of what the more able pupils can do. In addition, the inaccurate use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning leads to many pupils in these year groups not doing as well as they should.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They have a firm grounding in the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and this prepares them well for their next stage of learning. Though teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not capitalise on this good start, the more effective teaching in the older classes enables pupils to catch up and make satisfactory progress by Year 6. In reading and mathematics, pupils have made some rapid gains but this has not always been the case in writing because pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their writing across subjects. This is starting to improve and boys in particular say they enjoy the opportunities to write about things of interest to them such as sporting events and visits to places of interest.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils care for others and they develop good relationships with adults and each other. They know the difference between right and wrong and they play together happily and safely. Pupils like school and say that their lessons are fun. Their attendance is now satisfactory and better than it was. Pupils know about healthy eating, though some still choose to eat things they know are not good for them. Many pupils take regular exercise because they know the importance of keeping fit. Pupils contribute well to their school and the wider community. Their good efforts to help improve their school have led to a grant to develop the playground areas. Pupils' skills in reading, numeracy and information and communication technology prepare them satisfactorily for the future but there is still some way to go before writing skills are as good as they could be.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' learning is slower in Years 1 and 2 than it is in other parts of the school. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make sure pupils know what they are to learn but activities often fail to help pupils

achieve this. An over-reliance on some rather mundane worksheets means that pupils have too few opportunities to develop their ideas further. Activities do not always build on pupils' successes and so improvement, for example in the quality of writing, is slow. This has a knock-on effect in the rest of the school. Recent improvements in the teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6 are starting to redress this. Some teachers' marking provides good pointers for pupils to help them improve their work, although this is not yet consistent in all year groups. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to do well. A strong emphasis on talk helps children to develop their ideas and raise questions about their learning. This was particularly successful when they talked to a visitor from the local police force about keeping safe.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides a broad range of relevant learning experiences. In the Foundation Stage, these are lively and matched well to children's needs. In other year groups, activities for the most part build satisfactorily on what pupils have done before, though this is not always the case in Years 1 and 2. The strong focus on linking learning between subjects is proving successful, especially in heightening pupils' interest in their learning. This shows in the improving quality of writing in the older classes. Pupils make good use of activities outside normal lessons. Many appreciate visits to places of interest, which they say help them become more responsible and make learning exciting.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Safeguarding procedures are robust and pupils say they are well cared for. Staff treat pupils fairly and pupils are confident that there is always someone they can turn to if they have any worries. Staff remind pupils about the need to take care of themselves and others and this leads to a well ordered and friendly atmosphere in the school. Pupils who struggle with their work receive some well focused individual support in the nurture group but support in class, particularly in Years 1 and 2, is not always so consistent. Though targets to help pupils improve their work are relatively new, older pupils say they find them helpful. Senior managers, however, acknowledge these targets are yet to be fully effective in raising pupils' achievements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work are rigorous and help to get to the root causes of pupils' underachievement. This helps senior managers, staff and governors to identify the right priorities for improvement. Absences in the leadership team over the past two years have impeded the implementation of measures to bring about change for the better, especially in halting the decline in standards by Year 2. As a result, the school has not dealt effectively with inconsistencies and weaknesses in teaching. The school sets realistic targets for pupils in the national tests but does not always achieve them in English. Senior managers track pupils' progress carefully and staff now have a clear idea of what they are expected to achieve with pupils by the end of each year. Senior managers evaluate this each term and now provide support more quickly for pupils who are in danger of underachieving. However because this is not yet raising pupils' achievement sufficiently in Years 1 and 2, the school is not at present providing satisfactory value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Whitgreave Primary School, Featherstone, WV10 7AS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the things you were doing.

Standards in Year 6 are similar to those in most other schools but pupils are not doing as well as they should at Key Stage 1 and the school needs extra help to improve matters.

Here are some of the good things we found about your school:

- Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start. Lively and exciting activities and good teaching help them to grow in confidence and do well in their work.
- You behave well, are kind and polite and get on well together.
- You help others less fortunate than yourselves and do a good job of helping to make your school a better place.
- You are considerate, act sensibly and take good care of yourselves and others.
- You enjoy the trips to places of interest and this makes your learning more exciting.

To improve the school still further we have asked the people in charge and your teachers to work together on three things:

- Help your teachers in Years 1 and 2 to make better use of what they know about your achievements so that they can plan activities that help you to do your best.
- Give you better opportunities to develop and improve your writing.
- Make sure that all teaching in the school helps you to improve and achieve better.

You can all help by trying extra hard with your work.

With best wishes for the future,

Fran Gillam Lead inspector

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Lead inspector