

Whitegrove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131145
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	315734
Inspection date	25 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Erin Cook
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Tsakmakis
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Westmorland Drive Warfield Bracknell RG42 3QS
Telephone number	01344 861 020
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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 and possible improvements in writing and mathematics, teaching and learning, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. 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

Whitegrove is a popular, very large primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small, but increasing proportion of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom have a home language other than English. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A lower than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). However, the proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is above average. The school has numerous national awards including the Basic Skills Primary Quality Mark, Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Whitegrove is an outstanding school. The dynamic and committed headteacher, extremely well supported by a dedicated senior management team, staff and governing body, ensures an excellent quality of education for pupils. The care, guidance and support for pupils, and their personal development, are both outstanding. Excellent links with other agencies and strong links with parents contribute to these. The majority of parents have positive views of the school, but some feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views and concerns. The inspection finds that the school listens to parents and keeps them well informed through its open door policy, regular newsletters, bulletin boards, a web site and an active parent teacher association. Where there are particular concerns, the school deals with these appropriately. The inclusion manager provides an excellent service for parents who may wish to discuss concerns they have regarding their children and their well-being.

Pupils are very positive about the school. They feel extremely safe and secure, knowing that staff are there to help them if they have any concerns. Year 5 and 6 pupils act responsibly as peer mediators, helping to sort out any minor squabbles. Excellent relationships, and the many enrichment opportunities offered within the school's outstanding curriculum, help to promote pupils' personal and social development and their high levels of self-confidence and esteem. One pupil spoke enthusiastically about a residential trip. 'It taught us teamwork; we overcame our fears and became more confident'. Wonderful displays throughout the school show pupils that their work is valued. Pupils enjoy many things about school, shown in their very good attendance. They particularly enjoy the wide range of sports on offer, organised by the specialist physical education teacher. They know the importance of keeping fit. Along with a very clear understanding of what constitutes a sensible diet, pupils are readily adopting healthy lifestyles.

Some parents express concern that sporting opportunities favour those with sporting prowess. Indeed, the school is very successful in competitive sport. There are, however, sporting opportunities open for all pupils within a wide range of extra curricular clubs. These clubs are often over-subscribed, but pupils acknowledge that the school does its best to accommodate their preferences. The school council takes its role seriously, knowing that it helps to make the school a better place. Pupils are also aware of the needs of the wider world and organise different fund raising activities. Behaviour is excellent, resulting in a harmonious school community and a very strong eagerness to learn.

Achievement is outstanding. At the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good and often outstanding. This progress has recently been enhanced through well-focused action taken by the school, following a thorough analysis of achievement and standards in writing and mathematics. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening, through discussion, drama and role play, has helped pupils to develop their ideas, language and vocabulary for writing, so further improving the quality and content of their work. In mathematics, attention has been given to developing calculation strategies throughout the school. The impact of this was clearly seen in lessons where Year 6 pupils quickly and confidently calculated percentages, and Year 2 pupils quickly saw the relationship between multiplication and division. Although, in the last two years, standards at the end of Year 6 have been well above average, pupils currently in Year 6 are well on track to meet the extremely high levels achieved in the 2005 national tests for English, mathematics and science, clearly evidenced by the recent assessment of their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make excellent progress. Those with

statements receive very well focused and experienced support for their differing needs. A number with speech, language and communication needs also benefit from an 'attention and listening' group. Given pupils' very high level of basic skills and excellent personal development, they are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

The school monitors pupils' progress very carefully, and sets very challenging end-of-year targets for teachers to plan towards and for pupils to aim for. As part of their performance management, teachers are accountable for the progress pupils make throughout the year. This is helping to ensure that teachers look closely at the day-to-day progress pupils make to ensure that future lessons challenge all pupils appropriately. It contributes to the outstanding level of teaching and learning in the school. Lessons are very well planned, prepared and managed. Pupils say that 'teachers make lessons fun'. This was evident in a tremendously exciting, yet challenging, Year 6 lesson, where pupils ran stores under the eagle eye of the general manager, the class teacher. Pupils had to respond quickly to directives, as stores competed to show how efficient they were. Pupils use computers competently to support their learning. Teaching assistants work very well alongside teachers in their supporting role. There are very good opportunities for pupils to assess the work they are doing. They are set individual targets to aim for and understand how these can help them to improve their work. They also appreciate the constructive comments teachers provide in their marking.

The school development plan sets out appropriate areas for improvement, based on thorough monitoring and meticulous self-evaluation. The curriculum has been reviewed and events planned that make stronger links between subjects. These provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop their different skills in interesting and purposeful situations. An example of this is the recent week spent looking at myths and legends, and the resulting writing and art work. The school recognises the benefits of this more creative approach to pupils' learning, and plans to extend it further. Leaders regularly monitor teaching and learning. Lesson observations are focused on agreed areas of school improvement. Weaknesses in teaching are identified and support given, helping to maintain the extremely high quality of teaching. Thought is given to how teachers are paired in year groups, to provide support for new teachers and to share experience and expertise. Given the significant impact of recent actions to raise achievement, and the improvements since the last inspection, for example the further development of the Foundation Stage and systems to identify any underachievement, the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children are extremely well provided for in the Foundation Stage. The new accommodation provides a very caring environment that fully supports children in their learning. They enter Reception with levels of attainment mostly above those expected for their age. There is a weakness in pupils' communication skills, which the staff work hard to address through many planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Children make very good progress here. When they start in Year 1, the great majority are working well towards the goals expected of them. A significant proportion fully meets or exceeds these goals. Personal and social development is especially strong and children quickly become confident learners. Very friendly links with parents, and their confidence in the school, mean that children quickly settle and learn the routines. Planning shows a very good balance between activities directed by staff, and times for children to explore and discover for themselves. Activities make good links between the different areas of learning within interesting topics, such as 'My Pet'. Planning further identifies

points for observation and assessment, so that a thorough, ongoing record is kept of children's progress in the different areas of learning. The outside area, currently undergoing further development, is very well incorporated into children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that plans to develop cross-curricular links further are fully applied throughout the school.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

02 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Whitegrove Primary School, Bracknell, RG42 3QS

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke with some of you during my visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Whitegrove is an excellent school. I liked these things the most.

- Children in Reception get an excellent start to their time in school.
- You work very hard and make excellent progress.
- Your teachers show you how well you are doing and how to improve your work.
- You behave extremely well and enjoy your lessons.
- The school supports you well when you find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- You have a very good range of clubs to choose from and the residential trips provide you with memorable experiences.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors do an excellent job.

The school works very hard to make your learning more exciting. Your recent work on myths and legends gave you the opportunity of using your different skills in a challenging and enjoyable way. For example, in your writing and art and design skills. The work you produced was very impressive and showed your enthusiasm. The school is planning more of this sort of work and must ensure that you all get many opportunities to learn in this way.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector