

Henry Whipple Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131017
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	319544
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Lloyd
Headteacher	Mr Ken Dearden
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Padstow Road Bestwood Nottingham NG5 5GH
Telephone number	0115 9155723
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Henry Whipple Primary School is an average size school that opened in September 2007 and was created from the amalgamation of two former schools. Many of the staff from the two schools, including the headteacher, transferred to Henry Whipple. The school is set in the heart of a large housing estate in an area of high social disadvantage, and the majority of its pupils live on the estate. Most are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils entitled to receive a free school meal is more than double the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Henry Whipple provides pupils with a satisfactory education. The challenges of establishing a new primary school have dominated the life of Henry Whipple in recent months and represent a significant achievement for all. Questionnaires and discussion with the Parents' Council show that parents are pleased by what the school provides. One parent expressed the views of many when writing, 'my child really enjoys school and gets on well with her teacher and the other children in her class'.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From starting points that are below national expectations, and in some cases well below, children in the Foundation Stage Unit make at least satisfactory progress. Progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and by the time they leave, standards in mathematics and science are just below average. Weaknesses in some of pupils' basic literacy skills limit their progress in English. Progress is not as rapid as in mathematics or science and consequently standards fall below average. A key priority is to raise standards further.

The pupils' satisfactory achievement reflects broadly satisfactory teaching. At Key Stage 2 in particular, teachers often set their sights too low when pitching objectives because they do not analyse with sufficient insight what the pupils do, or do not understand. Lessons do not sufficiently challenge pupils and marking lacks precision about what the pupils need to do to improve next. Whilst monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, it has lacked sufficient rigour to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress in their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and recent developments are ensuring that there is a more cross-curricular approach to planning. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory overall and the school provides a safe, happy and friendly place to learn. The school is beginning to monitor closely the progress of individual pupils through recently introduced systems for assessment, tracking and target setting.

Relationships are positive and reflect pupils' satisfactory personal development. The school takes good care in supporting individuals and in boosting self-esteem. Pupils who find learning difficult, such as those with social and behavioural difficulties, are supported well, for example, through the learning mentor. Pupils are happy and talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy coming to school. A small minority of pupils with irregular attendance is being effectively monitored and supported. Pupils are responding positively to the good opportunities they are being given to influence their new school through the school council. An appropriate emphasis on developing healthy lifestyles helps pupils know how to keep healthy and fit.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and are committed to taking the school forward. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are successfully uniting the staff team and raising expectations of how pupils' academic standards can be improved. Despite a number of vacancies following amalgamation, the governing body is committed to being involved in both shaping the school's direction and challenging its effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The welcoming and purposeful atmosphere of the Foundation Stage unit gives children a secure and happy start to school, and this helps them to achieve well. The high quality care, guidance and support ensure that children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and

emotional development. Children's positive attitudes to work and their ability to work and play together happily, provide them with a secure foundation for the next stage in their learning. Teaching is satisfactory and all staff, including teaching assistants, are developing a good understanding of how young children learn. The bright and well-planned learning environment ensures that children have equal access to all six areas of learning. A high priority is placed on learning through play, both indoors and outdoors. The staff make perceptive observations of the children's learning and track their development carefully. Parents appreciate the weekly 'stay and play' sessions and these are well attended. The new Foundation Stage leader is providing satisfactory leadership and management and has a clear vision for the future development of this integrated Foundation Stage Unit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school in literacy, numeracy and science
- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all pupils are challenged to work hard and that marking tells pupils what they need to do to improve
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall because pupils are making broadly satisfactory progress across the school from starting points that are below, or in some cases well below, national expectations. Children in the Foundation Stage soon start to catch up, but the majority still enter Year 1 with lower than expected skills. Progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are lower than average, particularly in writing. The recently introduced target setting and tracking systems in literacy and numeracy are beginning to provide pupils with a clearer understanding of the next steps needed in their learning, including their writing, to improve further. Analysis of assessment data is being used to ensure that groups of learners who may be underachieving are identified, and set appropriate, but challenging targets. The latest teacher assessments indicate that the trend is now upward. The school has set realistic, but challenging targets for the current Year 6 to attain in 2008. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress because tasks and support are carefully matched to individual need.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, and enables them to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. The school successfully fosters strong and caring relationships among its pupils. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. They are polite and courteous to visitors and proudly welcome them to their school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they have confidence in their teachers to deal with it. Although attendance is below the national average, the school has effective procedures to encourage regular attendance. Members of the school council take their role seriously and are helping to make improvements to the school playground facilities. Most pupils understand and adopt

habits that contribute to a safe and healthy lifestyle, as reflected in their snacks and lunches. Pupils' basic skills in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, but they lack sufficient literacy skills to support them fully in their adult lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The calm and supportive manner in which teachers manage the pupils and organise their tasks is a consistent and dominant feature of teaching throughout the school. As a result of this important strength, pupils feel secure and work conscientiously. Where teaching is good, there is an atmosphere of high expectation in which pupils are fully engaged with their learning, enjoy stimulating activities and make good progress. Slow pace and insufficient match of task to the ability of pupils are common factors in the otherwise satisfactory lessons. Classroom assistants make an important contribution to lessons by providing effective levels of support to those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those needing extra support and care. The inconsistency and lack of precision in marking hinders pupils from understanding what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. The curriculum for personal and social development supports pupils well and gives vulnerable pupils the confidence to contribute in lessons. Provision for ICT has been limited since the new school opened due to a number of difficulties beyond the control of the school. However, this is now being addressed to ensure greater access for all pupils. The curriculum includes a satisfactory focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy full access to the curriculum. Pupils' personal development and enjoyment are promoted well through a good range of after-school clubs, as well as excursions and visitors to the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good because of the positive relationships that exist at all levels within the school. These are built on confidence and trust and consequently, pupils feel valued. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that there is always someone they can go to if they have any worries or concerns. The role of the learning mentor offers a valuable source of support, particularly for older pupils. Vulnerable children are supported well through robust child protection and vetting procedures. Bullying and racist incidents are rare and handled firmly, but sensitively. The school has good links with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Individual targets are set for pupils in literacy and numeracy, but these are not well enough linked to marking, to help pupils achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team has been successful in bringing together the staff from the former schools to create one caring and resourceful team. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates that the school knows what it needs to do to improve. There are suitable plans for school improvement. Senior managers are beginning to gather the information necessary to inform them of the school's progress through the implementation of new procedures for target setting and individual pupil progress tracking. However, insufficient rigour has been applied to the monitoring of teaching and learning. Newly appointed subject and phase leaders are growing into their leadership roles and already have a good understanding of some of the strengths and areas for development in their subject areas. There is a clear priority on raising standards and new performance management systems hold teachers accountable for the standards achieved by their pupils. The governing body is very supportive of the school but recognises the need to act more perceptively as a 'critical friend'. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
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

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?	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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Henry Whipple Primary, Nottingham, NG5 5GH

It was lovely to visit your school a few weeks ago and you all made me feel so welcome. Thank you very much. I really enjoyed talking to many of you during my visit. I particularly enjoyed meeting some of the youngest pupils who were enjoying magic carpet rides, making flap-jack, and exploring lots of other exciting activities. I was also impressed with the Year 6 children who were highly motivated in their literacy lesson and working hard to produce some good quality writing ideas. I was also pleased to see the school council taking their role seriously through helping to improve the playground facilities.

You told me you enjoy coming to school and that you are proud of Henry Whipple. You are right to be proud of your school and you are receiving a satisfactory education. Most of you work hard in your lessons and your behaviour is good. Well done! You all feel very safe in school and trust your friends and all the staff.

However, there are some things that could be even better. I have asked your teachers to improve these for you. Many of you could reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they work as hard as they can to help you reach higher standards. You can help by working as hard as you can. This will sometimes mean trying harder and doing more challenging work. In some of your lessons, the work you are given is too easy and you do not make as much progress as you could. I have asked all of your teachers to make sure that every lesson is at least good and that the work you are given is appropriate and challenging. When your teachers mark your work, their marking is not as helpful as it should be. I have asked them to try to give you useful comments to show you how you can improve your work and build on your previous learning. You must read their comments carefully and make sure that you understand what you need to do to improve. Mr Dearden will be checking to make sure that these things are happening, so that you can all make better progress in the future.

Thank you for a very enjoyable visit. Always remember to do your best!

With best wishes for the future,

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector