

Whitehorse Manor Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101742
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323516
Inspection date	11 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Juliet Ward

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Hill
Headteacher	Mr Jolyon Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
School address	Whitehorse Road Thornton Heath CR7 8SB
Telephone number	020 8684 3929
Fax number	020 8239 0037

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issue:

- How well the school had raised attainment in mathematics and science for higher-attaining pupils.

The inspector gathered evidence by jointly observing lessons with senior managers and through discussions with staff, pupils and governors. Pupils' work, parental questionnaires and the school's records of checks on the quality of its work were also scrutinised. The tracking of pupils' progress was carefully analysed. 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 by its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a diverse community in South London and takes most of its pupils from the infant school located on the same site. Around two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The main groups represented in the school are White British, Black Caribbean and Black African. In total 27 languages are spoken throughout the school and just under a third have English as an additional language. This is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just above the national average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need, which include behavioural problems, speech and language delay and autistic spectrum disorders. About a quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is higher to that found nationally. The school has achieved many awards including the Activemark Gold and Healthy School Awards, and the 'Mathletics' London mathematics challenge in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Whitehorse Manor Junior School is an outstanding school which provides its pupils with a high-quality and inclusive learning environment. This is summed up by one parent who wrote, 'My daughter has had an excellent education at Whitehorse due to the teachers' infectious enthusiasm for learning which inspires the children to achieve very high standards.' Pupils' achievement and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents justifiably have great confidence in the school, and detailed their views to the inspector. Outstanding leadership and management at all levels underpin the school's success. The headteacher and leadership team are focused firmly on raising achievement through an imaginative curriculum and excellent teaching. This enables pupils to thrive in a stimulating, safe and caring environment.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been above average for several years, and remain so. All groups of pupils make substantial progress from their starting points in school, so that the rate of achievement is outstanding. This rapid progress is also made by those pupils entering the school with very low attainment at different times during the year. The inspection of 2006 recognised that standards attained by some of the higher-attaining pupils in mathematics and science were not as good as they could be. Leaders tackled these concerns in a number of ways, for example by improving the teaching of investigative skills. Consequently, standards in science are now high with more than half of the pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in 2008 (Level 5 is one level higher than that expected of Year 6 pupils). Attainment in mathematics has been increased by the use of the online 'Mathletics' programme. This has significantly improved pupils' problem-solving skills and many of the pupils said how much they enjoyed this activity. The enjoyment of reading has been very effectively nurtured through a partnership with the parents to improve their children's reading skills. Standards in reading are now high. However, their skills in writing for many different purposes, although good, are less well developed and remain an area for improvement. The school has identified several ways of improving writing. This includes ensuring that pupils have plenty of opportunities to discuss texts and participate in role play and drama. In an outstanding literacy lesson, pupils in Year 5 took the role of the 'nosey neighbour' to report on the antics of the wolf and the pigs in the traditional story, writing persuasively from the point of view of either animal. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most gifted and talented are given very well-matched support and challenge to enable them to reach their potential, and as a result all groups of pupils make very good progress.

A great strength of the school is the way it effectively promotes pupils' personal qualities and involves parents in their children's learning. This is underpinned by the school's emphasis on everyone being important and valued in 'The Whitehorse Way'. As a result, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. For example, the wealth of different cultures, faiths and languages found at Whitehorse are celebrated by all the school community. One parent wrote, 'The school embraces diversity well with a commitment to Every Child Matters.' Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community by taking advantage of the extensive opportunities that are available for them to take responsibility. Through the school council, pupils have been able to propose areas for improvement and make a difference, for example in having new playground markings for games and replacing the bark floor in the 'trim trail'. A high proportion of pupils engage enthusiastically in physical exercise and sport and they are proud of the many certificates, for example for achievement in swimming, that

they hold. Pupils support their peers and make sure that all take responsibility seriously. Their many contributions to the wider community include performing music and drama in local events, and culminated in winning the Croydon Music Festival this year. Fund-raising by pupils to support schooling for two children in India is raising their awareness of those less fortunate and provides them with actual insight into these children's lives. Pupils feel extremely safe in school, and have very great confidence in staff. As one pupil said, 'Little problems don't get bigger because the teachers sort them out.' Lots of pupils told the inspector about the 'suggestion box' where they put their ideas of how things can be improved. Parents also have avenues to make suggestions, and welcome the recently introduced texting system as a means of instant communication between school and home. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are excellent and all age groups enjoy school immensely, being proud to be part of the 'Whitehorse' community. As a result, their attendance is significantly better than that of most schools and there have been no exclusions. Pupils' excellent personal qualities and basic skills equip them to be successful, responsible and caring young citizens.

Outstanding teaching and learning play a major role in ensuring pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Pupils are adamant that, as one rightly put it, 'lessons are such fun'. This view is supported by the very many positive comments made by parents. One wrote, 'My son loves school because the staff make him feel cared for and encourage him to do his best.' Teachers plan thoroughly and provide well-considered learning objectives. The wide variety of interesting tasks keep pupils working at a lively pace. Teachers provide articulate explanations and use skilful questioning extremely well to develop pupils' knowledge and to check that pupils understand what they are doing and move them onto the next stages of learning. In most lessons pupils are active, and in the best they are encouraged to work independently for significant periods of time. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support. The use of assessment to inform learning is evident in lessons; pupils are regularly told how well they are doing and are given very clear guidance on how to improve their work. One pupil explained how marking helps her do better, and how she loved checking her book to see what the teacher had written. The school's rigorous monitoring and assessment system ensures any underperformance is tackled quickly through well-focused interventions. For example, those pupils who struggle with aspects of learning have additional support classes and 'catch-up' groups to address their difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics, and their tracking records show they make accelerated progress.

The outstanding curriculum meets the needs and interests of the many diverse groups extremely well. Attainment data are used very well to guide staff in developing the curriculum and in grouping pupils. A beneficial partnership has been forged with the adjacent infant school to moderate standards between Years 2 and 3 to ensure a smooth transfer between the schools. The contributions from outside speakers, such as from groups such as the 'London Ambassadors' who come to speak to pupils about the workplace, and opportunities for all groups, including women, to pursue interesting careers, prepare pupils very well for future employment. Pupils are very positive about the exceptionally wide-ranging choice of lunchtime and before and after school activities which enrich and extend their learning.

All staff show impressive levels of commitment to providing high-quality care, guidance and support. Vulnerable pupils are supported very well through personalised programmes to support their language and extend their vocabulary. The school provides a supportive family environment that all pupils recognise and value. Academic progress is monitored very well and pupils' targets are regularly reviewed and discussed with them. Child protection requirements and procedures are fully in place and the safeguarding of pupils is robust. Strong links have been established

with parents and outside agencies to support the school's work and promote pupils' well-being. The pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles, their excellent behaviour, the high level of participation in activities and their achievement are testament to the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive.

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher and leadership team are not complacent, believe that 'only the best will do', and have striven to improve yet further. All members of the school community have a shared vision and determination for pupils to experience an exciting and stimulating education. Many parents paid tribute to the headteacher. One parent wrote, 'I feel a strong sense of leadership emanating from the headmaster.' Self-evaluation is highly effective and accurate. Systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation are used to help the school meet challenging targets. Thorough, regular observation of lessons provides an accurate evaluation of teaching and learning that leads to clear identification of priorities for development. Very effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection. Training and support given to develop the skills of middle managers have had a substantial impact. The governors are well informed and execute their responsibilities very competently. They provide highly effective support and challenge and promote and support community cohesion in a number of ways. For example, several successful 'international' days have been hosted to encourage children and their parents celebrate and find out more about the community they live in. Year-on-year improvements in standards and achievement, the quality of teaching and learning and in academic guidance show that the school has outstanding capacity to build on its strengths.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the start made at increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes across the curriculum.

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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?	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 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/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitehorse Manor Junior School, Thornton Heath, CR7 8SB

I would like to thank you for making me so welcome when I came to your school. I really enjoyed visiting all of your classes, looking at your work and talking with you.

Your school is outstanding and has so many really special features. I especially like the way you and your parents feel supported and helped so that you enjoy coming to school and learning. You have so many opportunities to participate in after school clubs and go on visits. All of the adults working with you care very much about you and want you to do well. Your headteacher is passionate about making sure you all develop a love for learning. Some of your parents said how impressed they were with the way the teachers inspire you to learn by making your lessons interesting and challenging. You make outstanding progress during your time at Whitehorse Junior. Your behaviour is exemplary and you listen so well in lessons and try really hard. It was good to see how kind you are to each other and how willingly you help others.

To make your school even better, however, I have asked your teachers to give you even more opportunities to write interesting and exciting stories and reports. This will help you make even better progress in lessons.

Please thank your parents for kindly sending in the letters and responses to the questionnaire; there were so many responses with lots of extra comments about Whitehorse Junior. These helped me to understand how well the school is doing.

Yours faithfully

Juliet Ward

Lead Inspector