

Whitefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104570
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	324071
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	251
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Hoare
Headteacher	Miss Helen O'Donnell
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Boundary Lane Liverpool Merseyside L6 2HZ
Telephone number	0151 2635976
Fax number	0151 2608571

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Inspection number	324071

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average-sized primary school serves a residential area with significant social and economic disadvantage close to the city centre. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery, in a Reception class and also in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The majority of pupils are White British with a small but growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average.

The school holds the Activemark award and has Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its exceptionally well behaved pupils. The relatively newly appointed headteacher and the restructured senior leadership team are already having a beneficial impact on achievement. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and provides good value for money.

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are very low, especially those relating to communication, language and literacy. They leave Year 6 with standards that are broadly average. This is due in no small part to the outstanding leadership provided by the special needs coordinator and the assessment coordinator. Their early identification of a large number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their consequent support, ensure that all children's achievement is good. It is a good example of how the school promotes equality and diversity well. After some inconsistency and decline in test results since the last inspection, provisional results for the 2008 national tests show a significant improvement. This improvement has been maintained with the current Year 6 pupils making good progress. School data indicate that they are reaching standards that are broadly average. The inspection recognises the significant improvement in the most recent results, with particular strengths in mathematics and science. However, standards in English are not as strong. In spite of the school's efforts, pupils' speaking and listening skills are still not sufficiently developed to enable most of them to articulate their thoughts with confidence. Consequently, this impacts negatively on their achievement in writing, and on their future economic well-being.

While the school leaders and governors work hard to foster links with the local community, there are too few opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of culture and diversity in the wider community and beyond.

Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils say that they feel safe, and that the few instances of bullying that occur are dealt with effectively by the staff. Pupils' behaviour is excellent at all times and there is respect and consideration between pupils of all ages and backgrounds. Staff use praise well, and effort and thoughtfulness are rewarded and celebrated. This has raised pupils' motivation and has directly improved their achievement. Pupils say, 'Lessons are fun and you always get the help you need.' Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's efforts and a number have commented on the improvement in their children's work. Pupils understand the need to eat healthily and exercise, and the school has improved the quality of its meals. Its Healthy Schools status and Activemark award are recognition of its success in this area. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to the school community. The school council makes the views of pupils known to staff and governors and has helped to provide equipment for the playgrounds. As many pupils are hampered by their weak speaking and listening skills, their preparation for their future success is satisfactory rather than good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and has brought about a rise in standards across the school. Effective use is made of computers and electronic whiteboards to motivate pupils and give lessons variety. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of work and behaviour. Lessons are well planned and interesting and staff ensure that work is well matched to the needs and abilities of individual pupils. The curriculum is good but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience aspects of life in and beyond their own community, and planning to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills needs greater focus.

Pupils benefit considerably from the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides. It has built on the excellent work acknowledged by the last inspection by further strengthening links with parents and carers and extending the range of expertise available to pupils. The guidance given to pupils to help them improve their work is excellent, and their progress towards challenging targets is carefully assessed.

Given the school's overall improvement in its performance, it demonstrates good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the EYFS. They enter Reception with skills that are very low for their age in all areas of learning, especially in language and communication and their personal, emotional and social development. The school works hard to build a positive relationship with parents and carers and this helps children to settle quickly and gain confidence. As a result, they make good progress, particularly in their reading and their communication skills, although skills overall remain below those expected for their age at the end of Reception. Recent strategies to improve children's skills in personal and social development are beginning to make an impact. Activities are well planned by the committed staff and are informed by observations and assessments based on learning initiated by the children. There is a good balance of adult-led activities to ensure effective learning. Children from the mixed Reception and Year 1 class are provided with tasks appropriate to their age and ability and benefit from the opportunities they have to socialise and share experiences. The indoor learning areas are well resourced and stimulating and encourage children to explore, investigate and be independent. The school is working to improve its outdoor learning areas. These are less well developed with children having access to fewer opportunities. This limits their progress. The welfare of children in the EYFS is promoted well. Their safety and happiness is given priority and this enhances their learning. The newly appointed manager has a good overview of future improvements and leads her dedicated team well. She ensures that children's progress is carefully assessed and recorded.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of well planned enrichment opportunities in all lessons for pupils to practise their skills in speaking and listening in order to improve standards in English, particularly in writing.
- Ensure that all children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of culture and diversity within and beyond their own community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement overall is good. Pupils are building on the good start they make in the EYFS. Although the school's results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have only shown slight improvement in recent years, current assessment shows that pupils are working at a level approaching the national average. Staff in Key Stage 1 have successfully worked to develop the skills and personal qualities that pupils need to access learning. In Key Stage 2, results declined after the previous inspection, particularly in English. However, the school's much improved early identification and support of its large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with its strategies to improve standards generally, have begun to bear fruit. Provisional results in the 2008 national tests show that pupils reached a broadly

average standard and the school's data shows that pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are working at levels that are broadly in line with national averages in all subjects. Given their low starting points, this represents good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the small number who speak English as an additional language are making progress in line with their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. Their enjoyment of school is good and reflects the quality of the teaching and the curriculum. Pupils are proud of their school, and their behaviour is excellent. They have outstandingly good relationships with staff. Attendance is in line with national averages, and this is the result of the school's strenuous efforts to work with parents and pupils to reach this standard. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to participate in the wide variety of clubs and activities the school provides for them. Pupils understand how to keep safe and realise the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Their contribution to the school community is satisfactory, with some pupils taking responsibility as school councillors or play leaders. Pupils raise money for charities, and the school choir has performed at the local library. Opportunities to take wider responsibility and to have greater involvement in the local and wider communities are limited. There are initiatives in place to involve pupils in a number of local enterprise and financial awareness schemes. Pupils' skills with computers and technology are improving along with their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, their speaking and listening skills remain underdeveloped and this impacts negatively on their confidence and their aspirations for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Enjoyment and a strong sense of learning together characterise the teaching taking place in school. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. Relationships are a strength of the effective learning, with staff showing care and sensitivity and a positive attitude towards pupils of all abilities. There is effective teamwork, with teaching assistants becoming more involved in the planning and delivery of lessons. Strategies to raise standards in reading and mathematics by providing additional support to targeted pupils have been very successful. The school has shown awareness of the need to raise pupils' speaking and listening skills. Whole-school initiatives have involved drama and communication skills, and there are opportunities for questions and discussion in most lessons. However, many pupils, including those with higher abilities, remain frustrated by their inability fully to express themselves verbally. Until this vital area is tackled with the energy and determination the school has demonstrated in other subjects, the progress of its pupils will be restricted.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It has made a significant impact on pupils' improved achievement and their personal development. It has succeeded in its aim of raising pupils' knowledge, awareness and enjoyment. There are good links with local sporting and cultural

organisations that benefit pupils' health and add to their skills. Staff are involving local retailers and resources in pupils' learning to make it more realistic. Pupils speak with pleasure and enthusiasm of the many visits they experience to Chester, Southport and the Pier Master's House. The book week events taking place during the inspection brought writers and poets into school and included a joyous fancy dress parade involving staff and pupils. It illustrates how successfully the school can inspire and motivate its pupils and their parents, carers and relatives. Pupils' experiences of cultures and life in a wider context are limited, as are focused opportunities to develop their communication skills to their fullest potential, and this limits their progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its pupils. There is a strong family atmosphere and sense of community in the school. Parents greatly appreciate the efforts made to care for their children and the breakfast club for all pupils is a great success. Pupils say they are well cared for by the dedicated staff and know there is always someone to turn to should they be upset or troubled. Links with outside agencies are very well developed so pupils receive the expert additional support they require. Arrangements to safeguard pupils and ensure their safety are in place and meet current guidelines. Pupils' progress towards challenging targets is carefully assessed and help is provided where needed. The school has maintained the quality of the guidance it gives to pupils about their work since the previous inspection. Teachers' conscientious marking uses praise well but also gives clear advice about the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work. Pupils are becoming increasingly skilled in assessment of their own and each other's work which helps to improve their progress further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The newly constituted leadership team is well led by the headteacher who has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has improved its learning resources, and changes to the internal layout of learning areas have helped make learning more effective. The structure of the building makes more ambitious extension and modification difficult and expensive. A comprehensive programme of professional development has resulted in staff gaining new skills and expertise that are beginning to make a good impact on standards. The school development plan now has a secure overview on raising standards and achievement. As many staff are new to their leadership roles, the monitoring and evaluation of subject performance is not yet consistent enough to ensure that all staff have an equally effective impact on raising standards and achievement further. Where leadership is at its best, the life chances of vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are truly enhanced. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. However, opportunities for pupils to access the wider community and further afield are not yet sufficiently developed. The supportive governing body is led by an experienced and knowledgeable chair, and is becoming increasingly effective in challenging the school to improve its performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

Inspection of Whitefield Primary School, Liverpool, L6 2HZ

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share with you what we found out.

You go to a good school where you make good progress and reach standards that are similar to those reached by other children. We were extremely impressed with your excellent behaviour at all times. The way your school cares for you and gives you support and advice about your work is outstanding. Members of your school council have helped to provide equipment for the playgrounds and make sure staff and governors hear your views. You told us that you feel safe, and really enjoy your lessons. You all seemed to be having great fun with the writers and poets visiting your school for book week. The fancy dress parade around the yard where you and your teachers dressed up as characters from literature was fantastic. Your parents and relatives really enjoyed it too! We know about your choir singing at the local library, the fundraising you do for charity and your enthusiasm to take part in sport, art and music, and the trips and clubs your school provides. We hope the older pupils had a great time and lots of adventures on their residential visit to North Wales.

We would like you to do even better with your work and so we have suggested two things that will help. We would like your teachers to find even more interesting and exciting lessons and activities that will improve your speaking and listening skills. This will further improve the abilities you need to succeed in the future such as your writing and communication skills. Also, we would like you to have more chances to improve your knowledge and understanding of people who live in other places in this country and the rest of the world. You can help by always trying your best and thinking about how you can improve even more. Everyone at Whitefield wants the best for you and for you to do as well as you can.