

Upper Whitley Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107664
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324616
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	61
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Lyles
Headteacher	Mr M Rodgers
Date of previous school inspection	May 2006
School address	Liley Lane Grange Moor Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 4EW
Telephone number	01924 326804
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, the improvement plan and analysis of school records on pupils' progress and attainment. The inspector also analysed 29 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at:

- the progress pupils make and how well pupils apply themselves and work in lessons, in particular boys in English lessons and the more able pupils in all lessons
- the quality of the support, guidance and care pupils receive and pupils' personal development
- the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at different levels.

Information about the school

This well below average sized primary school serves a socio-economically mixed area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage in one Reception class. The number of pupils in each class varies significantly from year to year.

The current headteacher and a significant proportion of the teaching staff joined the school at various times following the last inspection. The school has received the Activemark, Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People Award.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Upper Whitley is a good school. It has a strong caring ethos and amply fulfils its aim 'to provide a learning environment where children can develop confidence and self-esteem'. Parents value the warm 'family' atmosphere, where each child is very much known as an individual. As a result, pupils enjoy their time at school and readily take on responsibilities and show high levels of care and concern for others.

Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff, parents, pupils and governors and ensured that the pace of improvement has continued. Standards have risen at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Children receive a sound start to their learning in the Reception class and then go on to make good progress, relative to their starting points, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 pupils have attained above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

The school's leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning throughout school. This has led to faster rates of progress by pupils. Pupils achieve well because they have positive attitudes to learning and receive good quality teaching. Lessons have a clear focus and are well planned. Learning activities usually meet the needs of different groups of pupils well and provide a good level of challenge. However, occasionally pupils do not do as well as they could because the pace of lessons is not always brisk enough to sustain the best progress.

The basic curriculum is satisfactory. It is currently under review and being modified to match pupils' needs and interests more effectively. The school's leaders have recently introduced themed weeks which add challenge and relevance to learning. For example, the recent African Arts Week supported pupils' learning particularly well. Pupils greatly enjoyed having the opportunity to design and make drums, and produce a range of vibrant artwork as they learnt about life in a different culture. There are clear plans to provide a wider variety of learning activities throughout school and develop more links between subjects. Opportunities for pupils to improve the quality and content of their work through extended pieces of writing and to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning across the curriculum are not always fully used. In addition, learning activities, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, do not always provide enough challenge for the more able pupils.

The headteacher has ambition for the school, a clear understanding of the school's strengths and is very quickly addressing areas for development with the committed staff team. The improvements made since the last inspection and such strengths in leadership and management clearly show the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the improvement in teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is always brisk enough to sustain the best progress
 - ensuring that there is a greater degree of challenge for the more able pupils, particularly in the Reception class.

- Ensure that the curriculum provides:
 - more opportunities for extended pieces of writing to improve the quality and content of pupils' work
 - more opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

All groups of pupils, including boys in writing activities and more able pupils, make good progress relative to their starting points because they receive good quality teaching. Pupils work hard and they are keen to do well. Occasionally, pupils do not make as much progress as they could in lessons, as the pace of learning slows. In particular, pupils do not always have time to complete their written work or to produce more detailed extended pieces of writing. This has a particular impact on the more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the sensitive support of adults in school and the great attention paid to pupils' individual needs. Pupils enjoy their time at school, as shown by above average attendance rates. Relationships throughout school are positive. As a group of pupils agreed, 'Everyone is really nice at our school!' This makes a significant contribution to pupils' levels of achievement and well-being.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 fluctuate a little from year to year. This is because of the differing abilities of very small numbers of pupils taking the national tests and assessments. Even so, there has been a trend of above average standards and pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach their challenging targets.

Other key features of pupil outcomes:

- Pupils say they feel safe and they are confident they would find someone to help if they had a problem.
- Behaviour is good throughout school and parents comment that behaviour has

improved in school. The new behaviour policy is effective because pupils and staff have been actively involved in its development, discussing how they would like everyone to behave at their school.

- Pupils develop important life skills as they readily take on roles of responsibility. For example, playground leaders show high levels of care and concern for others. They keep everyone active at playtimes by leading sporting activities.

Good progress in basic skills, alongside opportunities to be involved in decision making at school, prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Features of most lessons were:

- good classroom management helping maintain a positive learning environment
- clear lesson planning, which meets the needs of different groups of pupils, ensuring good rates of progress
- marking effectively showing pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve further
- questioning, and speaking and listening activities used well to allow pupils to explore ideas and extend their thinking. As a group of pupils agreed, 'We learn more, because we have to think more.'

However, in a few lessons there is occasionally a lack of challenge for the more able pupils and the pace of learning is not always brisk enough. For example, lesson introductions are at times too lengthy or pupils are given too much time to complete an activity and so their interest can wane a little.

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. It has some good elements. Strengths include the recently developed themed weeks, the promotion of personal, social and health education and the good range of extra-curricular activities. The school acknowledges that opportunities to improve literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum are currently underdeveloped. In particular, pupils have limited opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing or to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.

The support, care and pastoral guidance pupils receive is good, especially because staff know each individual pupil very well. Clearly targeted support helps the more vulnerable pupils benefit from all the school has to offer.

The school's after school club also provides a happy and secure environment. Pupils enjoy a range of fun activities managed by school staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher has very quickly harnessed the support of the enthusiastic staff team. New initiatives are successful, because they are based on careful self-evaluation, involving all staff as well as considering the views of pupils and parents. As a result, plans for improvement are clearly focused on the most important priorities. All staff effectively take part in leading whole-school initiatives and monitoring the school's performance.

The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion and care for pupils and takes effective action to meet the needs of individual pupils. A close check is kept on pupils' progress, so extra support can be provided for any child who is not doing as well as expected. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current statutory requirements. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. This is through initiatives involving the local community, such as the school garden project, and also through the curriculum. The school's leaders are evaluating how they can support pupils further in this area. Governors are very committed and effectively challenge and support the school in its drive for further improvement. The school benefits from the regular visits governors make to school to work alongside the headteacher and other staff in the classroom, as well as from their professional expertise.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the Reception class children's skills are generally as expected for children of a similar age. Children make sound progress as they enjoy a variety of learning activities. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations when they join Year 1. Children make the best progress when they are working with an adult. However, they do not make as much progress when they are working independently, because these learning activities do not always have the same clear focus. This can slow rates of progress, particularly amongst the more able children, as they are not always stretched and challenged enough in their learning. The warm approach of the staff and the opportunity to work alongside older children in school helps children to settle quickly into school. The care and attention to children's welfare is a relative strength of the provision. Following a period of staffing changes the committed staff team are working closely with the headteacher to improve the quality of learning activities further. The quality and organisation of the learning resources have improved and children now have more opportunities to learn outdoors.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents who returned questionnaires and those who spoke to the inspector during the inspection are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. The school's

leaders and level of care and support provided are highly valued by parents. Parents feel welcomed into school and consider they are well informed about their children's progress and well-being.

Parents feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and is quick to respond to concerns raised. The recently established parents council is enabling parents to play a greater part in the work of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a Key Stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



9 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Upper Whitley Junior and Infant School, Wakefield,
WF4 4EW

Thank you for being very friendly and helpful when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking to staff and joining you in lessons, at lunchtime and in assembly. You should be proud of yourselves, because you are polite and behave well. Your work as playground leaders shows how well you look after each other.

Your school provides you with a good education and it has improved since its last inspection. Your headteacher leads your school well and makes sure you are happy and you learn well. All the staff work hard and give plenty of support. Your parents told me they are pleased with the recent changes your headteacher is making to your school and how well adults at school look after you. You make good progress with your work and reach standards that are above those typical for your age at the end of Year 6. This is because you work hard and receive good teaching. Lessons are well planned and teachers show you how you can do even better. You told me how much you enjoyed your recent African Arts Week. You make steady progress with your work in the Reception class and I know you enjoy going outside more to learn now.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

- Make sure you learn at a fast pace in all lessons and help those of you who are capable of reaching even higher standards, particularly in the Reception class, to do so.
- Give you more opportunities to produce some longer pieces of writing and use computers even more to help you learn.

Keep working hard and enjoying your school!

Yours sincerely

Fiona Gowers
Lead inspector

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