

# Whinstone Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111656
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	325425
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joy Frost HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	541
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jaqui Sherwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mike Poppitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Lowfields Avenue Ingleby Barwick Stockton-on-Tees TS17 0RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 750318
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 750988

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Whinstone Primary is a larger than average school in a relatively affluent area on a developing housing estate to the south of Stockton-on-Tees. Most families live in owner occupied housing. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage but there are a few from minority ethnic groups and some are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have a learning difficulty and/or disability is below the national average. However, the proportion that has more severe or complex needs with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average and is rising year-on-year. The school has achieved the Gold Healthy Schools award, Investors in People and the Silver Eco-Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of the good care and teaching the school offers.

Pupils regularly attain above average standards in their work at the end of Years 2 and 6. In 2008 the provisional standards attained in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for eleven-year-olds were above national expectations and represented satisfactory but improving progress. This continued the pattern of achievement over the last three years. The school has identified this trend and a more rigorous tracking system has been introduced which enables teachers to track more closely how well pupils are progressing in lessons. The impact of this could be seen in most lessons during the inspection where pupils were making good progress.

There are however, inconsistencies in practice across the school. Where teaching is good, lessons are exciting and captivate the interest of learners. Work is well matched to different abilities in the class and this enables pupils to move on at a faster rate. In some lessons however, work is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities and their progress slows, especially for more able pupils.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school which is evident in their excellent attendance and attitudes. They also have an outstanding knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are able to decide for themselves how to keep themselves fit and healthy through good drug, tobacco and alcohol awareness. Pupils get along well together and form good relationships with their peers and adults in school. They have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from harm and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through their many fundraising activities at home and abroad and good volunteer work within the local community, for example younger pupils regularly plant bulbs in the community.

The curriculum is good and it is helping to underpin pupils' personal development through good personal and social education. The structure of the curriculum has been very recently revised to ensure more links are made between subject areas and to promote more opportunities for writing. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in enrichment activities and pupils can talk enthusiastically about the many places they have visited and how these visits have improved their learning.

The school takes good care of its pupils and procedures to ensure their safety are in place and meet current regulations. Staff are knowledgeable about individual pupils who may require extra support and care plans are up to date and shared with staff. Pupils have targets linked to subject areas which tell them what they need to work on to improve their work and these are known by pupils and parents. For more able pupils these targets are not always changed regularly enough and some teachers are not using assessment data effectively enough to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been recent changes to school staffing and the membership of the governing body. The headteacher has reorganised his senior team to involve more people and has appointed team leaders who have specific responsibilities for working with groups of teachers across the school. These team leaders are developing their management skills well and are becoming more involved in monitoring provision and in working alongside colleagues. While all of the procedures and strategies necessary to monitor and

evaluate the work of the school are in place, monitoring is not yet sufficiently focused on how pupils are learning across the school. Other planned actions are beginning to have an impact in most areas of the school's work. The leadership of the school, including the governing body, therefore demonstrate that they have a good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and gives children a good start to their education. Children's skills and knowledge when they enter the Nursery are currently in line with those expected for their age. They quickly settle into school because good procedures for learning are established from day one. The care and welfare offered by the staff is exemplary and this enables all children to feel safe and secure and build good relationships with their peers. All staff have a common understanding of how young children learn and work together very well as a team. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is a good role model and leads by example. There is a good balance between teacher directed, focused activities and activities children choose for themselves. Children show very good levels of enthusiasm and enquiry, and as a consequence most make good progress in all areas of development.

Identified key workers are responsible for individual children and they liaise very closely with parents. There are many opportunities for parents to find out how well their children are doing through 'Parents as Partners' initiatives and through workshops. Assessments of children's work are carried out regularly and are used well to plan activities which closely match children's abilities and interests both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. A focused programme of phonics helps children to acquire the skills necessary to become good readers and writers by the time they enter Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' achievement so that it is consistently good across all classes.
- Establish whole-school strategies to ensure consistency in teachers' use of assessment and marking to further accelerate pupils' progress.
- Further develop the skills of the leadership team to enable them to focus their monitoring on how pupils are learning across the school.

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged to be 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**

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Children historically enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are above that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 1 and in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 standards have been above average in reading, writing and mathematic for some years. In 2008 standards dipped to below average for the first time because a large proportion of this year group needed extra support with their learning. Support was quickly diverted to this year group and successful interventions have accelerated their learning and most are now catching up to where they should be. The school has good tracking systems which enable teachers to identify pupils who are falling behind. This information is used well to plan interventions for different groups of

pupils and for individuals. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to give personalised support where it is needed both within and outside of the classroom and pupils who have a learning difficulty and or disability generally make good progress. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 pupils consistently attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science both at the nationally expected level 4 and at the higher level 5. However, this represents only satisfactory progress from pupils' earlier high starting points at the beginning of the key stage. The school has identified pupil progress as an area for improvement and they have made this the main focus for their work. Although evidence of much better progress was seen during the inspection this has not yet had time to fully impact on pupils' achievement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are a credit to the school and this is reflected in their outstanding attitudes to learning and excellent attendance. Pupils told inspectors how much they like coming to school and how much they enjoy it. Pupils are able to talk eloquently about how to live a healthy lifestyle and are very knowledgeable about what choices they needed to make. They are aware of the need for a good diet and exercise and this was evident in the choices they made in the dining hall and in the proportion of pupils who regularly walk or cycle to school. Pupils are aware of 'stranger danger' and road safety. They say that incidents of bullying in the school are rare but that they know an adult they could talk to if they had a problem. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good but some pupils can be a little boisterous in the playground. Pupils feel that they are listened to through their activities on the school council and say that they feel valued. They believe their opinions have a strong impact on school decisions. Involvement in the local community is good. In school pupils are taught skills that will help them when they enter the world of work. These include an awareness of Eco and Green issues.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall with some variation across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning skills well to challenge and engage their pupils. In the most effective lessons teachers make very good use of time, the pace is brisk and resources engage and extend pupils' learning. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils that encourage a good level of involvement and contributions in lessons. Pupils are eager to learn and join in enthusiastically. These qualities along with good behaviour in lessons promote good learning. In most lessons activities planned match the full range of abilities. However, this management of challenge, especially for more able pupils, is inconsistent and occasionally some pupils do not make the anticipated progress. Progress is further restricted when, in a minority of lessons, pupils sit on the carpet for too long, restricting the time available for them to pursue their tasks and activities. School leaders are aware of this and the need to establish consistency in the approach to the marking of pupils' work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and meets requirements. Much work has gone into the recently established curriculum which is designed to thread aspects of different subjects

into a topic-based approach. However, this is in its early stage of implementation and the mapping of skills in all subjects that contribute to topics is still being refined. The provision for social and emotional aspects of learning is beginning to promote pupils' personal and social development. The school is moving towards giving pupils remote access to their tasks using Information and Communication Technology (ICT); by establishing a portal and virtual learning environment. This will also make planning more efficient and accessible for teachers. Whole school curriculum weeks are very popular. They engage all year groups in workshop style learning and frequently include elements of enterprise skills development. The curriculum is well enriched by many visits and visitors to the school as well as residential visits for older pupils. An extensive range of extra curricular clubs are on offer and are very well attended. All pupils including the youngest in the Nursery learn French, which helps them appreciate diversity and cultural similarities and differences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for in school. Parents rightly praise the warm atmosphere and pupils appreciate that staff know them well and are approachable at all times. Relationships between pupils and staff in school are built on mutual respect and trust. Procedures are in place to make sure that all pupils are kept safe. Staff are regularly updated on safeguarding and current child protection procedures. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties receive good support in their learning especially when working on a one-to-one basis or within a small group. Pupils with more complex learning or behavioural needs have appropriate individual support so that all feel included within the school. There are good examples of curricular and individual target setting; where teachers use targets well to move pupils forward and to aid their learning but this is inconsistent across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory because actions put in place to accelerate pupil progress across the school have not yet had time to fully impact. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. He works well with his newly created team leaders to plan actions for improvement. The senior leaders know the school well and the school improvement plan is accurate. However, some planned actions have been slow to impact. There are also inconsistencies in the way some staff have interpreted new initiatives. The new team leaders are developing well and they have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the schools' work through a scrutiny of planning, pupils work, teaching observations, pupil interviews and working alongside colleagues. However, there is sometimes a lack of opportunity for senior leaders to focus their monitoring efforts on pupils' learning across the school. The school are promoting community cohesion within the school and the local community well and they are in the process of developing a more global dimension through the use of pen pals.

The governing body has undergone a radical change of personnel in the last year. The new chair of governors has plans to increase the amount of meetings to incorporate more governor training and has set up a buddy system for new members. The governing body is kept well informed by the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors are increasingly challenging the work of the school and holding it to account.

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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	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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whinstone Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 0RJ

On behalf of the inspection team who visited your school recently to see how well you were doing, I would like to thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us. We

were impressed with how well you all get along together and with your attitudes in lessons and around the school. We think that overall your school is satisfactory but that some elements of the school's work are good.

Your teachers are planning good lessons for you that you seem to enjoy because you were very keen to join in, answer questions and share your ideas. Your teachers and helpers take very good care of you and the youngest children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher is trying to change the curriculum so that you can make more links between different subjects. We noticed that you are all very aware of saving energy and reducing your carbon footprint by switching lights off and recycling, which is very good.

We have asked your headteacher and the governors to make some changes to make your school even better.

- Make sure that you all make as much progress as you are capable of in all lessons.
- Make sure that all teachers across the school have the same approach to setting targets and marking your work.
- Make sure that when the headteacher and his team come into your lessons to observe teaching they focus on what you are learning and how it can be improved.

I wish you all continued success and hope that you all continue in your efforts to be Eco warriors and to help save the planet!

Joy Frost HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector