

# Whitegate Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122739
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	327787
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marina Gough

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)	280
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>	Mrs Vera Colagiovanni
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steve Farr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2005
<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>	Middlefell Way Clifton Estate Nottingham NG11 9JQ

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	327787

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is situated in the centre of a large estate and draws pupils from the local and wider communities. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) when they are three years old. Their attainment when they start school is exceptionally low. A higher than average number of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are mainly of White British ethnicity. The local area is regarded as being socially disadvantaged and a higher than average percentage of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school manages its own breakfast club. The school has gained a number of awards over recent years including the Active Mark for sports, the Healthy Schools Gold Award, and the Princess Diana Young Persons' Award.

## 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 that has made good improvement since its last inspection. It knows itself well. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school, in their questionnaire returns.

The school has put in place a number of very good initiatives to boost the language and social skills of children before they join the Nursery. One of the most successful is the GReaT project, (Getting Ready Together) which is helping parents to learn how to take part in early learning activities with their children. Although EYFS children make good progress, because of their exceptionally low starting points, their attainment when they join Year 1 is well below the level expected for their age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 make good progress but their attainment is below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school rightly recognises that more needs to be done in terms of raising the standard of writing for all pupils, boys especially, as this is one of its ongoing targets. Pupils have difficulty in extending their ideas and with their spelling.

Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic about their learning. They get on well with one another, and the peer mediation work carried out by older pupils is a significant strength in terms of encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils are very clear about how to maintain healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.

Teaching is good but is not consistent across the school. During the inspection it ranged from just satisfactory to outstanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, and do much to promote a culture of trust enabling pupils to share their concerns and successes freely. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of additional learning opportunities, including after school clubs. However some of the morning literacy and numeracy sessions are too long, which reduces the amount of time available for other subjects and opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes.

One of the school's real strengths is the level of pastoral care it provides for pupils and their families. The school recognises that there are some vulnerable pupils, and does much to remove the barriers to their learning. The breakfast club provides an excellent start for many pupils. The learning mentor is a respected and trusted 'go-between', providing an important haven for parents and pupils who are experiencing difficulties. The governing body's decision to create this role reflects its understanding of the community it serves and its real desire to support pupils and families so that learning can take place.

The school is well led by the headteacher. He has a very clear view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and drives change and improvement at a measured pace. He knows the local community well, and is constantly striving to introduce new initiatives that will further strengthen the partnership between home and school. Because of the enthusiasm and willingness of staff and its track record of good improvements, the school has good capacity to improve. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and are supportive, caring and very much 'hands-on' in terms of helping out in school. Their role as 'critical friend' to the headteacher is less developed, but they are tackling this shortcoming through training.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The school provides well for children in the EYFS and captures their attention by providing well chosen activities that appeal to their interests. Although EYFS children make good progress from an exceptionally low starting point, their attainment when they transfer to Key Stage 1 is often well below average. Throughout the EYFS there is a good focus on the children learning through first-hand experience. Teaching is good. It is often lively and imaginative and ongoing assessments are used well to help teachers to identify the next steps the children need to take in their learning. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support learning. The purpose built Nursery classroom and outside area provide a very good learning environment. However, the Reception classroom does not have direct access onto a covered outside play area and opportunities for Reception children to learn and play outside are limited. The EYFS is very well led by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well-organised leader. She has done much to encourage parents to come into school with pre-school children. The GReaT project, which provides adult learning in collaboration with a local college, is already having a very positive impact on the children's learning and attainment and is significantly strengthening the links between home and school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the long morning sessions so that lessons are shorter and there are more opportunities for pupils to practise writing in other subjects.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly in the use of resources to support and stimulate learning, so that pupils in all year groups have the same quality of learning experiences.
- Improve the outdoor learning environment for Reception children so that they are able to access outdoor play activities freely.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 achieve well and make good progress. Over recent years, there has been a steady rise in standards, especially in mathematics and science. Writing continues to be a weakness for some pupils, especially boys, and hinders their progress in subjects other than English. Initiatives to raise standards that the school has introduced since the last inspection are starting to have an impact, but this is most evident in Key Stage 1. The school is now doing well in stretching its more able pupils so that more are reaching the higher than expected standard, Level 5, in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Tracking shows that some of the most vulnerable pupils thrive and make more than the expected amount of progress because of the additional support they receive. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do especially well, and the school has gained a deserved reputation in the local area for its work with this group of pupils. As a result, a high percentage of pupils who move into Key Stage 2 from outside the catchment area fall into this category.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and courteous and treat one another and adults with respect. Bullying and racial incidents are very rare. Older pupils are

rightly proud of the work they do as peer mediators, for which they are trained and have received The Princess Diana Award. Pupils also work as play leaders as part of the 'Positive Play' strategy. They enjoy the responsibility of being in the school council and see it as a way of contributing to the life in school and 'getting things done'. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance has improved well so that it is close to the national average. Pupils are exceptionally aware of the need for maintaining healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils contribute to the local community by raising money for charities and visiting the local residential home for the elderly. Pupils' economic well being is good because they are making good progress in basic skills, preparing them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the links with Malawi are really extending the pupils' knowledge and cultural awareness. Older pupils demonstrate a real interest in the lives of others and understand that prejudice often stems from fear and ignorance. The work of the school makes a good contribution to strengthening cohesion within the community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships between pupils and their teachers are excellent and teachers often go to a great deal of trouble to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. The pupils' behaviour is very well managed so that individuals who struggle at times do not disrupt the learning of others. The teaching of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is especially good. Highly skilled teaching assistants work with individuals and small groups, giving them confidence and building their self-esteem. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Where teaching is most effective, lessons move at a brisk pace, pupils' levels of interest are maintained well and they are highly motivated. Occasionally, teachers do not make enough use of learning resources to support pupils' learning and to bring activities to life. Teachers are fully involved in assessing pupils' progress and attainment and know the strengths of individual pupils well.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school does a great deal to support the pupils' personal and social development and makes excellent use of a wide range of external agencies to support the delivery of the PSHEC (personal, social, health education and citizenship) programme. The curriculum is enriched by many after school clubs. Visiting speakers and visits help to support the pupils' cultural development and broaden their horizons. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but because in recent years the thrust has rightly been on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, too much time is given to these subjects, reducing the time available for other subjects. This means that there are only limited opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects and contexts. Some of the pupils say that they would like to have lessons other than literacy and numeracy in the mornings, and that some of these lessons are a bit too long. The current practice of timetabling most literacy and numeracy sessions in the morning also puts too much pressure on resources including specialist rooms, learning equipment and support staff.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The levels of pastoral care the school provides are outstanding. Teachers and governors put the well-being and safety of the pupils at the heart of all they do. Vulnerable pupils have excellent additional support so they can take a full and active part in their learning. Excellent links with external agencies play a key role in supporting the work of the school by bringing about cohesion within the local community and developing further the already very good links between home and school. For example, the 'beat bobby' is a regular visitor who works with the school to refer individuals onto youth schemes within the area. The provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and pupils and their parents share in the setting of new targets and reviewing progress. The learning mentor plays an excellent role in developing children's social and emotional capabilities and is proactive in following up absences and in supporting families through such activities as the 'Keeping up with the Children' sessions. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding children's welfare are in place. Achievements are celebrated so that pupils have good levels of self-esteem. Pupils are starting to take more responsibility for understanding and achieving their academic targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership is good. The headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher, has ensured all staff share the common purpose for the school. Progress since the time of the last inspection has been good, and change has been managed in a measured and sensitive way, so that all those involved have been able to contribute and share their views. The subject leaders form an effective team and have made a good start in raising standards further in their areas. Links with the local community are a strength of the school and provide a firm foundation for developing extended links. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to consider aspects such as prejudice and for them to celebrate differences between cultures, helping them to appreciate the value of community cohesion.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and leaders know what needs to be done next. However, although there has been much monitoring of teaching and learning, the information gathered has not been used to its full extent to ensure consistency in teaching across the school. The governing body is highly committed and supportive of the school's work but is at an early stage in developing its role of 'critical friend' to the headteacher.



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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?	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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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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	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	2
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	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**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitegate Primary School, Nottingham, NG11 9JQ

I am writing to let you know what we found out when we visited your school a short time ago, and to thank you for making us feel so welcome. We were very pleased to see how hard you work and how well you get on with one another. You told us that bullying is not a problem and that you feel safe in school. You get on very well with your teachers and know that you can go and have a chat with the learning mentor if you have any problems you want to discuss.

You are improving in English, mathematics and science, but your writing is still not as good as it should be. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to look at ways of giving you more opportunities to write in other subjects. You told us that you like coming to school but that you sometimes think the mornings drag because the lessons are too long. I have suggested to the headteacher that some of these morning lessons should be a bit shorter and that there could be a bit more variety. Your teachers do a good job and try their best to make learning exciting for you. We could see that they use the whiteboards well to make lessons more interesting and that they do their best to help you when you have difficulties with your work. However, sometimes teaching could be even better, and this is something we have asked the headteacher to work on with your teachers.

You are very well cared for in school, and many of you enjoy going to the breakfast club and the many after school clubs that are provided. Playtimes are happy times because of the 'Positive Play' and the good job that the peer mediators do. We think the school council is a good way of you letting your teachers know your views.

We think that your headteacher leads the school well. Staff and governors are always looking for ways of making things better for you, and one of the areas we have asked them to look at particularly is the outside play area for the Reception children, which needs developing.

I hope you all enjoyed the production of Pinocchio.

Best Wishes

Marina Gough

Lead inspector