

Whinfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134719
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	328958
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	582
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	Mrs Karen Cunningham
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Augusta Close Darlington County Durham DL1 3HT
Telephone number	01325 240499
Fax number	01325 240677

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school situated on the outskirts of Darlington. The pupils are mostly of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average; most of these are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with a statement of special education need is below that found nationally. The school has been successful in achieving the Healthy School Award, Sports Activemark and has Silver 'Eco' 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

Whinfield Primary School is a good school which has made good progress since its last inspection. Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features, particularly their behaviour which is exemplary in and around the school. Pupils are extremely polite and demonstrate excellent self-discipline, responding to the high expectations which staff have of them. Pupils really enjoy their education as shown by the laughter often heard in classrooms and by their great enthusiasm and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils demonstrate that they are highly aware of how to live healthy lifestyles as shown by their enthusiasm to participate in a wide range of sporting activities and events. They are also very aware of how to keep safe and they look after each other very well, including the very youngest children.

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and by the time they enter Year 1 most exceed the goals expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 because of the good teaching they receive. At the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics with some well above. Standards at Key Stage 2 have constantly been above or well above average over time in English and science and inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising markedly in mathematics because most pupils are making better progress than in previous years.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some lessons that are outstanding. Pupils make good progress in lessons because the pace is brisk and activities are interesting and enjoyable and engage them in their learning. There is a consistent approach to teaching evident across the school which ensures continuity for pupils and helps to accelerate the rate of progress because pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a good curriculum which caters well for their individual needs including those who are gifted and talented and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is greatly enhanced through a wide range of visits and visitors and also because of the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils.

The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are good. All staff are highly committed to ensuring that pupils feel safe and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet all statutory requirements. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this is shown by the sense of humour shared between them. Academic guidance is good. There is an effective tracking system in place which is used well to identify any pupils who are not achieving as well as they should and action is quickly taken to address this. Good support is provided by teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils, including more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Marking and assessment are used effectively to identify where pupils have achieved their learning objective and often where work can be improved. However, pupils do not always fully understand their individual learning targets to enable them to know precisely what they have to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and all senior managers demonstrate their determination to improve the quality of education and care for pupils through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. However, there are not always enough opportunities for all foundation subject leaders to monitor the work in their subjects and this limits their impact on raising standards. Governors have a good understanding of the school's

strengths and those areas which require improvement and provide a good level of support and challenge. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been tackled very well and therefore capacity to improve is good and improving. Value for money is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school from a variety of settings. These include nursery schools and local child minding services while some children have not benefited from any form of early years educational provision. Most demonstrate skills and abilities which are broadly typical for children of this age, but this varies markedly.

Children soon settle into the school and make good progress because of the careful induction arrangements and very caring approach of the staff. The welfare of the children is promoted well and they thrive in a safe, stimulating environment. Children's behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They communicate very well and co-operate with each other, persevering on tasks. Consequently, their personal development is outstanding. There is a well coordinated approach to teaching and learning and children respond enthusiastically to this showing their great enjoyment, particularly in learning outdoors. Planning and assessment are consistent in all classes and reflect the coordinator's desire for high quality provision and close checking of children's progress. All adults in the three Reception classes work well together to ensure activities meet children's needs. Children are able to select play activities independently and are able to explain what they are doing. Work seen in books is good overall but some of the children's writing is led too much by adults with children copying sentences that adults have written. This limits their opportunities to develop their independent writing skills. Adult led activities are planned very well and encourage the children to explore new and previously taught ideas.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve achievement and standards further, the school should:

- develop pupils' understanding of their individual targets to enable them to know precisely what they have to do to next to improve their work
- develop the role of foundation subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards reached by pupils are above average and their achievement is good. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of children their age. They make good progress in the EYFS because of the stimulating curriculum provided for them and the good teaching they receive and most exceed national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. The school regularly assesses the progress of all its pupils and takes immediate action if there are any areas of underachievement. Consequently, pupils make good progress throughout the school because their needs are met very effectively. At the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils reach above average standards and some well above. At Key Stage 2, standards in English and science have been above average or well above average over time. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that standards are rapidly rising in mathematics because most pupils are making better progress than in previous years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities and those who are more able also make good progress because of the effective, targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Some aspects are outstanding, for example pupils' excellent behaviour, the way in which they adopt healthy lifestyles and keep themselves and others safe. Pupils report that they enjoy school very much and that lessons are interesting. Pupils show high levels of concentration and sustain interest in their learning. The good attendance rates demonstrate how keen they are to come to school. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They report that there is very little bullying and they feel confident to tell a teacher if they have a concern or worry and know that this will be quickly resolved. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through fundraising events, such as 'Operation Christmas Child' and they sponsor two children in Haiti. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives because of the good development of their basic skills and through many opportunities to develop their social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. Pupils' spiritual development is good and assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding as a result of the well established work from the social and emotional aspects of learning programme (SEAL). This includes the use of a 'feelings' board in every classroom which pupils readily use to indicate how they feel each day. Pupils give good support to each other if they indicate they have a worry or concern. While pupils are involved in some good activities to promote their cultural development, their understanding is not as well developed because there are not always enough opportunities to learn about some faiths and other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in lessons as a result of effective, well structured learning activities that are planned well to meet the needs of all learners. A consistent approach to teaching is evident with learning objectives shared with, and explained to pupils at the start of each lesson. Pupils understand the learning objectives and how they might achieve them and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because they are supported very well by teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects and set high expectations for pupils, ensuring that there is a brisk pace in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers deal with pupils' misconceptions well, ensuring that effective learning takes place. Pupils are given opportunities to be reflective and assess their own performance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned very well and takes account of the needs of all groups of learners. Statutory requirements are met and there is a good breadth and balance to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning. The revised curriculum based on the Primary Strategy framework is beginning to impact positively on standards and is motivating pupils well. There are some good opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across the curriculum,

particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' understanding of environmental issues is promoted successfully through the school's involvement in the 'Eco' awards as shown by their participation in recycling projects.

Pupils have good access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and enrichment activities linked to several different subject areas including history and geography field trips. The school has developed effective links with schools in Spain and Turkey and exchange visits take place. These experiences are beginning to broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and this contributes very effectively to their enjoyment and achievement at school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection are very thorough and meet statutory requirements. New pupils settle quickly and happily into the school because of good induction procedures and the support of 'buddies'. The school works very effectively with a range of outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable children receive the best possible care. The school has a range of good strategies in place to improve attendance but these are being hampered by some families taking holidays in term time. This does impact adversely on the rates of attendance, although they are good overall.

Academic guidance is good. Good support from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress with the large majority achieving in line with their targets and capabilities. The progress of pupils is carefully tracked and any areas of underachievement are quickly identified and appropriate support is provided. This ensures that weaknesses are tackled and improvements made to enable pupils to achieve well. This strategy has had a positive impact on raising standards. Marking and assessment are used well to help pupils improve their work. However, pupils do not always fully understand their individual learning targets to enable them to know precisely what they have to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leaders provide highly committed and dedicated leadership. They have a very clear vision for school improvement which is shared effectively with pupils, staff and governors and is securely focused on raising standards. Core subject leaders and senior staff have contributed well to raising standards through regular monitoring of pupils' work and through lesson observations which result in very helpful feedback to teachers. However, some foundation subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to monitor the performance of their own subjects. Improved school self-evaluation has led to the accurate identification of priorities for improvement. Teamwork within the school is strong and all members of staff feel their contributions are valued. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school has good links with local, national and global communities and these enable the school to make a good contribution to community cohesion. Governance is good. Governors provide appropriate challenge and are very supportive of the school. They monitor provision well through meetings,

visits and helping in classrooms. Governors are knowledgeable about the work in the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to be improved.

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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?	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?	1
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	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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?	2

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?	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	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**

7 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whinfield Primary School, Darlington, DL1 3HT

Thank you for making me, Mr Trippier and Mrs Kettle welcome when we inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents for sending in the questionnaires and let them know that we have taken all their views into account. We spoke with you in lessons and around the school, looked at your work and spoke to some of your teachers. Here is a summary of what we found, which I hope will be of interest to you:

- Whinfield Primary is a good school. It is popular with both you and your parents
- you enjoy being at school and share a great sense of humour with your teachers
- you make good progress and standards in your work are above average because of the good teaching you receive
- your behaviour is excellent and you are all very polite and considerate young people
- the school is well led and managed
- the headteacher and all staff show great care and consideration to all pupils to ensure that all of your needs are met
- the teachers plan interesting and enjoyable activities for you so that you enjoy learning and make good progress.

There are some things which we think could be improved:

- we have asked that some of the subject leaders are given more opportunities to see how well you are doing in different subjects
- we would like you all to know and understand your own learning targets so that these will help you to know what you have to do next to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by making sure everyone comes to school every day.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Christine Inkster HMI

Lead inspector