

Whitehall Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102399
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	335892
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Broad
Headteacher	Joanna Nightingale
Date of previous school inspection	16 February 2007
School address	Cowley Road Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2LX
Telephone number	01895 234071
Fax number	01895 812691
Email address	whitehalljun@hillingdongrid.org

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent about two thirds of inspection time looking at learning. They visited 18 lessons, observed 16 teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils, including some members of the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governors' meetings, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and by a sample of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness with which the school's leadership and management identifies weaknesses in pupils' outcomes and provision, and focuses on the priorities for improvement
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum offer the challenge to ensure at least good achievement by all groups of pupils, especially in writing
- the extent to which the school's care, guidance and support lead to good or better personal outcomes for pupils
- how well the school promotes cohesion at all levels between different socio-economic, ethnic and religious groups.

Information about the school

Whitehall Junior is a larger than average school. A majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, most of whom speak English as an additional language. Of these pupils, very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally behavioural, emotional and social, or speech, language and communication difficulties, is well above average. Pupil mobility has been broadly average, but increased sharply in 2009. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club which are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately. The school is part of a Sports Partnership. Among the range of awards which the school holds are the Healthy Schools (Excellence Standard) and the Eco Schools (Silver) awards.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Whitehall Junior is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The headteacher has created a strong team spirit amongst the staff, with excellent support from the assistant headteachers and the senior and middle leaders. Everyone who completed the staff questionnaire strongly agreed that they were proud to be a member of the school. This leads to the very positive ethos. As a result, most pupils are very happy at school. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they were pleased with their children's experience. One delighted parent described it as a, 'lovely school with a very special feel to it. My child loves going to school. We couldn't ask for more.' Another wrote that their child has, 'enjoyed every day of coming to this school. The teachers are fun, firm and really care.'

The very high quality of the care results in the school's inclusive atmosphere. Pupils recognise this. One thought that it was, 'the best school in the borough, because everyone is welcome'. The outstanding care leads to personal outcomes for pupils which are at least good and in some cases excellent. The relationships between staff and pupils are warm and trusting. Pupils feel entirely safe when they are at school. Their practice of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They make excellent contributions to the school and community.

Pupils' achievement is good. From below average attainment on entry, especially in writing skills, pupils make good progress through the school so that attainment is broadly average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Good progress results from teaching that is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. Progress in reading and mathematics is more rapid than in writing. One reason is because the writing tasks that are set for pupils are not consistently challenging. A second reason is that, although teachers' marking indicates the ways in which writing could be improved, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to address the weaknesses. Pupils benefit from the broad curriculum that is on offer, and from the strong emphasis placed on English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). However, the opportunities to practise writing at greater length in other subjects are not as well exploited as they could be. The school's enhancement of the curriculum through visits, visitors and events, such as 'One World Week', and the quality of extra-curricular activities, is excellent.

Leaders have developed a confident vision for the school and created a warm and supportive climate so that pupils feel very secure. The high quality of the large range of partnerships provides excellent support for the curriculum and for pupils' personal well-being. The outstanding engagement of parents and carers is shown in the high levels of satisfaction evident in their responses to the questionnaire. At the time of the

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inspection, the school's procedures and systems fully met the requirements for safeguarding and for child protection. Parents and carers and staff are unanimous in their feeling that pupils are completely safe in school.

The annual cycle of activities to check the quality of the outcomes for pupils and the school's provision is effective. The analysis of tracking information about pupils' attainment and progress, and its use, are both excellent. Although a good range of evaluative activities takes place, monitoring has not resulted in the improvements to pupils' attainment and progress in writing that are evident in mathematics. Challenging targets are set and largely achieved. Given the school's record of sustaining good and better outcomes for pupils, teaching and curriculum provision of good quality, and outstanding care and guidance, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing through:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in literacy in other areas of the curriculum
 - improving the match of tasks to the different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to respond to their marking.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the school's strategies to raise standards is closely focused on improvements to pupils' writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most pupils greatly enjoy school. They are very confident in the adults' care for them, and feel free from bullying. They show an excellent awareness of safe practices, for example when using the internet. Pupils know very well how to adopt healthy lifestyles, and have been influential in improving the quality of lunchtime food. They practise healthy lifestyles, including a balanced diet, because activities, such as the 'Let's Get Cooking' initiative and the gardening club, develop their understanding very well. More than half of the pupils participate in clubs involving physical activities. In response to its close tracking of participation rates, the school has ensured greater involvement by vulnerable pupils in physical activities. The school holds the award of Healthy Schools (Excellence Standard).

Pupils play many positive roles. Members of the class and school councils know that school leaders listen to them. This is supported by the pupil who reported that, 'school council is really helpful because they listen to my views. It helps make the school even better.' Other significant opportunities for pupils include being 'Grove Guardians', 'Equipment Experts', librarians and assembly monitors. The 'Eco Warriors' help others to understand issues of sustainability through recycling, composting and energy-saving activities, leading to the school being awarded Eco-Schools (Silver). Pupils demonstrate good competence in the use of ICT. One thoughtful pupil showed good insight in writing

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that, 'The school does many things to help the community ' including fund raising money for children who are in poverty.' This serves to promote pupils' economic well-being successfully. Attendance is above average.

Behaviour is good. In class, pupils are very attentive and responsive to teachers and other pupils because of good teaching and lesson management. Around the school, behaviour is mostly good, though not consistently so when pupils are unsupervised. This is reflected in responses to the pupil questionnaire, where a large majority agreed that behaviour is good, but about a quarter expressed no view and a few disagreed.

Pupils' attainment on entry is below average, with few having done well for their age, especially in writing. Progress is particularly good in mathematics. In an outstanding lesson for the most able pupils, for instance, the challenges offered by the combination of individual, paired and teamwork ensured excellent progress. The school is fully aware that progress, especially for higher-attaining pupils, is not as good in writing as in other subjects. In part, this is because of the above average proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the school's inclusive approach and good teaching lead to good progress in reading and mathematics for both groups of pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

The great majority of teaching is good or better. Lessons are very well planned and include clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils. The strong relationships between teachers and pupils lead to good discussion of the learning, and this is well supported by the dialogue between the pupils themselves when they act as 'talk partners'. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in mathematics. In particularly good lessons, the teachers' high expectations of pupils, along with a rapid pace to learning and challenging tasks, ensure good progress. The skilled teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. For the most part, teachers are adept at assessing pupils' understanding through their questions. Where teaching is less successful, teachers do not consistently set tasks that are well enough matched to pupils' learning needs, so that there is either insufficient or too much challenge. In addition to the other reasons for pupils' slower progress in writing, teachers do not consistently foster the skills of composing more complex sentences.

Opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects are developing, but are not fully embedded. In the case of writing, the curriculum does not ensure good progression in pupils' skills, although the school is implementing initiatives to achieve this. Partnerships with secondary schools support provision extremely well, for instance in sports and in French. There is good enrichment, for example through the study of Denham village as a contrasting locality, and through visits to the theatre, museums and sites in London. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities ranges from sports and music to cookery and chess. Booster lessons before school offer good support for pupils in Year 6.

The school's arrangements to care for pupils, and especially to support any who are at risk, are comprehensive. The 'School Council Talk Box' and the 'Worry Boxes' allow pupils to express any concerns. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well focused, and staff make good use of them. The 'Pupil Well-being Team', including the new parent support adviser, provides strong support for vulnerable families and their children. A good range of strategies, including certificates, promotes attendance well. Very good links and close liaison with the adjoining infant school afford very good support for induction. Pupils' transition from Year 6 is helped through video conferencing arrangements with Year 7 pupils in a feeder secondary school. The termly pupil progress meetings show excellent tracking by the school, and enable pastoral as well as academic needs to be regularly reviewed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The senior team offer the school committed leadership and a strong sense of direction, which empowers middle leaders. Subject teams are closely involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and have had a good impact, especially in mathematics. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's many strengths and its few weaknesses. Governors know how to act as critical friends, and are keen to develop further their role in the school and with parents and carers who appreciate the school's very good communication with them, and the responsiveness of the staff. The school's leadership has a strong commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and in tackling discrimination. This has led to improved participation by vulnerable groups, and to improving performance in mathematics, though not in writing. The school has assessed its provision to promote community cohesion, and has developed a clear strategy. Highly effective contributions are made at the levels of the school itself and of the local community. At the international level, the headteacher has been very active in developing links with schools in Sweden, Brazil and China. Links at the national level are less well developed. The inclusive approach promotes cohesion well among the diverse local communities served by the school. The child protection policy is robust, and where necessary, procedures include involvement with outside agencies, with which collaboration is very good. The health and safety, safe and secure, and race equality policies safeguard pupils extremely well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers have positive views about Whitehall Junior School. All feel well informed about their children's progress. Almost all think that their children's needs are met. All parents and carers believe that the school keeps their children safe, and that the school supports a healthy lifestyle. Almost all think that their children are making enough progress at school. Inspectors judge that pupils make good progress.

All parents and carers believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. They all think that the school is well led and managed and almost all believe that the quality of teaching is good. Inspectors agree that the school's leadership and management are good, with some outstanding aspects, and that the teaching is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitehall Junior to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	62	26	37	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	73	20	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	52	35	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	45	39	55	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	59	26	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	48	35	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	55	33	46	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	45	36	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	41	41	58	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	54	34	48	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	42	37	52	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	61	29	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	66	25	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitehall Junior School, Uxbridge, UB8 2LX

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire.

We think that Whitehall Junior is a good school with some outstanding features.

These are the positive things about your school

- Your school has a very welcoming feel and a positive climate for learning.
- The headteacher and staff are very good at their jobs and know how to improve your school.
- All the adults take extremely good care of you.
- Your understanding of healthy living is excellent, and you feel very safe in school.
- Your contributions to your school and to the community are outstanding.
- You greatly enjoy school, listen and cooperate well in lessons, and behave well in class and around the school.
- A lot of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. The school has made the curriculum interesting for you.
- By the end of Year 6, your attainment in mathematics is above average and in English is broadly average. Your progress is good across the school.
- Your participation in the very good range of extra-curricular clubs is excellent.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with your experience at the school.

What your school needs to do now

- Improve your achievement in writing by giving you more opportunities to write in other subjects, by always setting you work that is suitably challenging, and by giving you more chances to respond to teachers' marking.
- Make sure that, when school leaders check up on your standards, they focus particularly on how your writing is improving.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector

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