

Whiteheath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102400
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	335893
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debra Lynch
Headteacher	Mr Barry Harmer
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and one assembly, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and a parent. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics, teachers' short- and longer-term planning, minutes of meetings and the school's plan for improvement. They also looked at the responses to the questionnaire for parents and those completed by pupils. In total, 198 responses were received from parents.

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

- how far the school's procedures ensure that pupils are safe, and that they feel safe
- how well pupils know and understand their targets and what they need to do to improve
- whether any individuals or groups of pupils were making outstanding progress in their learning.

Information about the school

Whiteheath is a large school in a relatively advantaged area of Ruislip. Most of the pupils join from the nearby infants' school. The pupils come from a wide range of ethnic heritages, although three quarters are from White British backgrounds. About one pupil in ten speaks a language other than English at home. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below that found nationally. The proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also lower than average. In the main, these pupils' needs relate to their learning, behaviour and speech and communication.

The school has received many awards. These include the Healthy School and Activemark 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils at Whiteheath attain highly. This is to be expected, as they join the school with levels of attainment that are above average. During their time at the school pupils make excellent progress and, by the time they leave, the gap between Whiteheath's results and the national average has widened still further. Year on year, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in both English and mathematics has improved; in 2009 every Year 6 pupil reached this important benchmark, and almost two thirds exceeded it.

Several factors combine to bring about these outstanding results. Importantly, there is a strong emphasis on fostering pupils' all-round personal development. Within the purposeful and supportive ethos, pupils grow into mature and confident individuals who are impeccably behaved and polite. They have an obvious thirst for learning. The school firmly believes that healthy bodies promote healthy minds. There is a great love of sport, team games and all forms of physical activity. The large display of cups and trophies confirms that pupils' academic success is matched by their sporting prowess. Equally importantly, the teaching is lively and engages the pupils very well. Teaching is carefully focused on the next steps that pupils need to take in their learning. Support for those who find learning more difficult or who are at risk of falling behind is well targeted and effective, ensuring these pupils also make excellent progress. The curriculum is highly relevant and helps bring learning to life. The school also makes every effort to ensure that the pupils are safe and secure and the quality of care, guidance and support for individuals is of the highest order. Parents recognise the school's considerable strengths. One wrote, 'I cannot fault the school in their teaching of my child. She has learnt well over the years. She was very shy when she started, but the school has made her confident and she has flourished'.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know exactly how well the school is doing because they regularly and honestly review its performance. They are justifiably proud of the school's achievements but there is no sense of complacency. Staff are eager to embrace new initiatives and ideas that will continue the forward momentum. Morale is high, teamwork is strong and staff share leaders' vision for the future. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its high performance and has been successful in improving pupils' progress still further. These factors confirm the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

There are no significant weaknesses in any aspect of the school's work. However, some fine tuning is needed. Governors offer a good degree of support and challenge and fulfil their statutory duties well, but their role in informing and shaping strategic developments is not so strong. The school communicates frequently and usefully with

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parents, but has recognised that the use of a broader range of media would be more effective in ensuring all parents are reached. The school's plan for improvement is comprehensive and thorough, encompassing many important actions that will contribute to sustained improvement, but it is not sharply focused on the agreed key priorities for the year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the procedures for improvement planning so that:
 - governors play a stronger role in determining the strategy for improvement
 - the key priorities are clear and sharply focused.
- Implement plans to extend the range of media used to communicate with parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All pupils excel during their time at Whiteheath. They make excellent progress in their work and attain highly in comparison with their counterparts nationally. This is equally the case for girls and boys, pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds and those who have difficulties with their learning. In lessons, pupils often make rapid gains in their learning, helped both by their enthusiasm and positive attitudes and by teaching of the highest quality. Inspectors observed pupils who were confident in their abilities as mathematicians, artists, writers, historians, dancers and singers and who gave of their best because the best was consistently expected of them. The school's records show that many pupils are making progress at twice the expected rate.

The pupils clearly enjoy their learning. Smiles and laughter occur during lessons, and pupils are evidently proud of their work. They are unfailingly polite and helpful, both to adults and each other. They work very well independently, in pairs and in groups and this, together with the high standards that they reach in their learning and personal development, means that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in the wider world. Pupils had no doubt that they were safe at school¹ a view echoed by their parents. Pupils also relish the many opportunities they have for physical activity and have an acutely developed understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils get along very well and respect one another's backgrounds and beliefs. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to help in school in some way. They are also frequently involved in raising funds for local, national and global charities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make sure that work is sharply tailored to the pupils' needs. Pupils do not mark time, because lessons are open-ended and there is always scope for them to move on to the next step. Some teachers are exceptionally skilled at asking questions. They make sure all have the chance to contribute, check that everyone has understood and, importantly, make sure that the pupils give reasons and explain their thinking. Errors or misconceptions are used as learning points and so pupils are not afraid to give a 'wrong' answer. In lessons, teachers make very good use of technology, including 'smart boards' and 'visualisers'. They also give careful thought to the provision of appropriate and varied resources and they achieve a good balance between direct teaching and practical activity in order to interest and motivate the pupils. Teaching assistants make no small contribution to the excellent progress of pupils who find learning difficult. They offer a judicious mix of support and encouragement and are mindful of the need for pupils to think and do things for themselves.

Outstanding marking, particularly in English, means that pupils are in no doubt about how well they have done and what to do to improve. It is not the school's style to home in on National Curriculum levels, but rather to focus pupils' attention on the next small steps they need to take. As seen in the excellent results, this approach works very well. During lessons, teachers routinely check that pupils have understood before moving on. Pupils are asked to evaluate for themselves what they have learned, and to explain how they know.

The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by an exceptional variety of activities, visits and visitors. Subject leaders make sure that memorable experiences such as

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productions, music concerts, school journeys and 'theme days' are built in to the curriculum throughout the year. They also pay close attention to making links across different subjects, and to how work in their subject will be adapted to meet individuals' needs. There is an outstanding range of activities before and after school, some provided in partnership with other organisations. Participation rates are very high. After school clubs were frequently mentioned by pupils as things they particularly enjoyed: 'They do loads of brilliant clubs!' wrote one.

The staff know the pupils very well indeed and go out of their way to meet everyone's academic, pastoral and welfare needs. Academic progress is carefully and regularly tracked and discussed, and interventions made where necessary. Should pupils have particular emotional, social or learning difficulties, a carefully tailored package of support is designed and offered, in conjunction with outside agencies where appropriate. The school works very well with a range of partners, including the local authority, and with parents and carers to ensure pupils' well-being. Parents and pupils greatly appreciate the steps taken to make sure the transition from infants to juniors is as smooth as possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Parents and pupils have the utmost confidence in the school's leadership. 'This school is well run by a great headteacher who inspires from the top down', commented a parent. Everyone pulls together and shares in the drive for continuing improvement. The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors are immensely proud of the pupils and are deeply committed to continuing to provide the best for everyone. This, together with the school's positive and supportive ethos, ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed, and do so. The staff benefit from the close attention that is paid to their professional development and are deeply loyal to the school. 'Why would I want to go and teach anywhere else?' remarked one. The Investors in People reassessment which took place shortly before this inspection highlighted good communication, a supportive culture and a strong focus on continuous improvement as particular strengths. The findings of this inspection support that view.

Arrangements to protect children and keep them safe are robust and well known to governors and staff. Policies are up to date and regularly reviewed, and careful records are kept. The school keeps a close eye on all of its pupils and especially those who are

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potentially vulnerable.

The school takes its duties to promote community cohesion very seriously. There is a clear strategy underpinning this work, based on a secure understanding of the needs of the locality. The evaluation of the impact of this strategy is not yet as strong.

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	1
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the questionnaire was very high. Most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with every one of the statements, indicating a very high degree of satisfaction with the school. The most positive responses were about the school's leadership and management, and children's enjoyment of school. The inspection team concurs with these views. A few parents felt that they were not always well informed about how well their children are making progress, or had concerns that their child was not making enough progress. The inspectors looked closely at the school's records and found that, taken overall, pupils are making outstanding progress. They also looked at the range and quality of information provided, and found that the school is in regular and frequent contact with parents. However, the school is rightly planning to extend the range of media used for communicating with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whiteheath Junior School 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 198 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 343 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	55	83	42	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	118	60	75	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	39	98	49	13	6	6	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	45	87	44	12	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	107	54	79	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	82	41	102	52	7	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	91	46	100	51	3	2	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)	97	49	88	44	2	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	46	89	44	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	42	94	47	10	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	31	113	57	9	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	121	61	63	32	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	116	59	72	36	2	1	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.



8 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whiteheath Junior School, Ruislip, HA4 7PR

Thank you so much for the help that you gave when we inspected your school recently. It was a great pleasure to meet and talk to some of you and to see you in your lessons and in the playground (when it eventually stopped raining!) Thanks also to those who filled in the questionnaire. We looked carefully at what you said and it helped us with our findings.

You told us that your school is outstanding, and we think you are right. There are so many things that are excellent about your school that I cannot possibly list them all here. I know most of you read very well, so ask your parents for a copy of the full report and there you will find all the details. I think that Year 4 should compose an article for their newspaper about it. The headlines could be:

- You work hard, make excellent progress and reach high standards.
- You behave exceptionally well.
- You love sport and have so many clubs and events that keep you active and healthy.
- Your teachers and other adults know and look after every one of you very well.
- Your headteacher, senior staff and governors lead the school very well and are determined that Whiteheath will go from strength to strength, both in how well you learn and how well you grow and develop as kind and confident young people.

I'm sorry that the last point isn't really a very good headline, but it is very important.

There are some little things that we have asked the school to do next. They are that: governors should play a stronger part in planning for the future; the school's plans must pinpoint the most important developments; and the staff should think of more creative ways of getting messages to your parents, for example by text or email. You can help by continuing to work and play hard.

I wish you the very best for your future. I'm sure you will make excellent use of your new sports hall and all-weather pitch.

Yours faithfully,

Linda McGill

Her Majesty's Inspector

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