

Whitley Abbey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103655
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	336126
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Faulks
Headteacher	Mrs Nancy Starritt
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 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 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents, the school's advisor and representatives from partners who work with the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work and records of their progress. They also looked at a range of documents, including governors' minutes, the school's development plan, a range of policies and the school's monitoring of its performance. The inspectors took account of 56 questionnaires from parents, 118 questionnaires from pupils in Key Stage 2, and 17 questionnaires from staff.

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

- the progress made by different groups of pupils
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of pupils
- how effectively the school's monitoring and evaluation systems promote better outcomes for pupils
- the school's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Three quarters of the pupils are White British and the remainder are from other ethnic groups, including other White backgrounds, White and Black Caribbean, Indian, Caribbean and African. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception class. There is a before and after school club on the school site, managed by the school's governing body. Pupils from the age of four years to 11 years attend the club. The school has received the following awards in recognition of its work: Healthy School Award, Silver Eco Award, Inclusion Quality Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Sports Mark and an International School Award - Foundation Level.

Since the previous inspection in May 2007 the school has experienced a high turnover of staff. Most of the teachers who were in post at the time of the last inspection have left. Only two out of the original seven class teachers remain. The deputy headteacher left in July 2008. The governors appointed a new deputy headteacher in January 2009. Staffing has now stabilised.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Whitley Abbey Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has a number of strengths, including:

- a committed team of staff and governors who share the headteacher's vision to help all pupils do even better
- pupils' behaviour and their understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe
- a secure and welcoming environment where pupils receive a good level of care and feel valued.

The staffing turbulence, pupils' low attendance the educational disruption, experienced by a significant minority of pupils who joined the school partway during the year, have had a negative impact on the school's drive to raise standards during the past few years. In 2009, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 remained below average in English and mathematics. Standards dipped to significantly below average in science. The school is taking effective action to improve provision. For instance, the introduction of a whole school approach to teaching writing is beginning to have a positive impact. The latest school assessment information and evidence from pupils' current work shows that attainment is rising, especially in Years 2 and 6.

Through strong links with parents and effective partnerships with a range of agencies, the school provides good support for pupils with specific needs and the most vulnerable. However, even though pupils are made aware of the importance of attending school, and despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains well below the national average for a significant minority of pupils.

Achievement is satisfactory. In some classes, the quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress. In one effective example, the teacher in Year 6 asked pupils a good range of questions to assess pupils' understanding and extend their learning. This strategy ensured all pupils were sufficiently challenged throughout the lesson. In contrast, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure activities are well matched to pupils' different abilities. Through oral and written feedback, teachers acknowledge pupils' achievements but do not always provide pupils with the specific guidance about how to improve their work and achieve their learning targets. The school acknowledges that teaching needs to be consistently good and better in order to raise achievement.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a satisfactory start to children's education. Relationships between children and staff are good. Staff keep detailed records about individual children's performance. However, this information is not always used well

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enough to plan activities that challenge children sufficiently in all areas of learning. The outdoor learning area is underdeveloped and not always used well to extend children's learning.

The school's leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Subject leaders and managers are using a wide range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to identify the actions needed to accelerate progress. Currently, there are not enough checks to ensure that all staff are consistently implementing these actions. This leads to inconsistencies in provision and satisfactory, rather than good progress. The improvements in teaching and learning that are beginning to raise pupils' attainment and achievement demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for making further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science across the school by using assessment information more effectively to:
 - match activities accurately to pupils' abilities
 - identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
 - respond to pupils' work and inform them of the actions they need to take to improve and achieve their learning targets.
- Extend the effective strategies which are in place to tackle the persistent absence of a significant minority of pupils.
- Increase the frequency with which subject leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve the consistency of provision and accelerate the progress of pupils in all classes.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan a suitable range of adult-led and independent activities for all areas of learning
 - further developing and making better use of the outdoor area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The quality of pupils' learning seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils are keen to do well and talk enthusiastically about their work. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were provided with success criteria so that they could evaluate a piece of writing. They spoke with confidence and correctly identified strengths and aspects that could be improved.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. The impact of pupils' improving progress can be seen in their higher attainment. The school's assessment information shows that a greater proportion of pupils are expected to reach the levels for their age

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than previously. The school has effectively started to tackle the dip in science standards by placing a greater emphasis on developing pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills through practical activities. In one good example, pupils made accelerated progress because they took part in a practical activity about molecules before making predictions about the movement of gas.

In general, girls' attainment is higher than that of boys'. To tackle this inequality teachers are taking greater account of boys' interests when planning. This approach is having a positive impact as inspectors did not see any significant differences between the performance of boys and girls in lessons or in pupils' current work.

Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other and the adults they work with. They feel very safe and know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils enjoy school and are positive about the improvements taking place. One pupil commented, 'Lessons are more interesting now'. Pupils' moral and social development is good, while their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Levels of attendance are significantly below average for a significant minority of pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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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The quality of teaching is improving. Strengths of teaching include:

- teachers setting activities which capture pupils' interests
- positive relationships between staff and pupils
- the useful support that teaching assistants provide for individuals and groups.

The use of assessment information to plan work is not as effective as it could be in ensuring activities meet the needs of different ability groups.

The school has introduced a more creative curriculum that offers pupils the opportunity to learn through first-hand experiences. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. In the words of one pupil, 'When we are going to write about the cold weather, we go outside first to help us think of some descriptive and interesting words. This is helping me to improve my writing'. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. Pupils told inspectors that they particularly like the different sports clubs including include netball, dance and football.

Strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents contribute to the good care, guidance and support. A number of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire commented positively about the determined efforts the school puts into this aspect of its work.

Pupils are well supervised in the before and after school club. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. As a consequence pupils feel safe and enjoy attending the different sessions. Pupils are particularly positive about the good range of activities on offer at the club. These activities effectively meet the needs of pupils of all ages.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been a stabilising influence during a period of turbulence. She has worked hard to develop teamwork and create a common sense of purpose. One member of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire wrote a comment that was typical of several, 'Whitley Abbey is a lovely place to work with a great team of people who work together for the best interests of the school.' Many of the subject leaders and managers have been recently appointed. They are developing their roles satisfactorily. The school's self-evaluation of its performance is over generous in some aspects such as the quality of the curriculum, where staff are still in the early stages of giving pupils the opportunity to apply literacy and mathematical skills in different subjects. Governors are supportive and increasingly hold the school to account for the

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progress pupils make.

The school's system for tracking the progress of different groups of pupils has improved since the last inspection. School leaders are using this information well to tackle any difference in performance and ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. The latest school data confirms that the gap between boys and girls is beginning to close. Nevertheless, the headteacher recognises that there is still more to do, particularly in raising achievement in science and writing for boys.

Safeguarding procedures are given a high priority. At the time of the inspection, they met statutory requirements. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps to keep their child safe. The school promotes cohesion well in the local community. It is aware that pupils could do more in the local community and develop a greater understanding of global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff work well with parents to ensure children settle quickly. Children's behaviour is good. They listen carefully and act responsibly. When children begin in Reception, their skill levels vary from year to year. They range from below those expected for their age to broadly in line. Performance levels in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are relatively weaker and below those normally expected. Children make satisfactory progress because of satisfactory provision.

In lessons, children respond with enthusiasm when they are encouraged to take an active part in lessons. An effective example of this was seen during a story-telling

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session when pupils repeated phrases from the text and read with the teacher. On occasions children do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence and discover things for themselves. This is because there is sometimes an imbalance between adult-led activities and those children can choose for themselves.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed by the Reception class teacher. She is well supported by a teaching assistant. They regularly share information about individual pupils to ensure that pupils feel safe and well cared for. Their use of assessment to match activities to children's different learning needs is satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the outdoor area. The headteacher recognises that staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage will require support to make the changes required to improve provision and outcomes for children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents hold very positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with their positive comments, particularly about care, guidance and support. A number of parents referred to the valuable support they had received from the school. One parent wrote, staff 'are very approachable and willing to help'.

A few parents raised concerns about some aspects. They were most concerned with behaviour. Inspectors are satisfied that the school has in place a range of suitable strategies to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and promote good behaviour. For instance, a wide range of activities at lunch time are enjoyed by pupils and encourage them to behave well and cooperate with each other. Pupils told inspectors that staff are fair and promptly deal with any concerns they may have.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitley Abbey Primary 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 inspector received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 183 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	77	13	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	73	15	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	46	29	52	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	61	22	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	59	23	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	55	24	43	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	46	28	50	2	4	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)	23	41	26	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	50	26	46	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	29	34	61	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	43	26	46	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	61	20	36	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	66	19	34	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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitley Abbey Primary School, Coventry, CV3 4DE

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting and talking to many of you, looking at your work and visiting your lessons. We would also like to say thank you to the groups of pupils who had discussions with us and the pupils in Years 3 to 6 who completed the inspection questionnaire. Thank you for inviting us to your Christmas concert. We enjoyed your performance.

You told us that your lessons have become more interesting and this is helping you to learn. We agree. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Some of you are making good progress.

The headteacher, the staff and governors work hard to make sure you are safe and well looked after.

You know how to stay safe and keep yourselves healthy. Some of you told us how much you enjoy the different sports clubs, especially netball, dance and football.

In lessons and around school, you behave well. You are polite and kind to each other.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and the governors to do the following to improve the school further.

Make better use of information to help all of you to make more progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Check regularly how you are doing to make sure that you are doing as well as possible.

Improve attendance. We want you to try extra hard to help your school improve even more in this. You can help by coming to school everyday.

Help the youngest children in the Reception class make the best possible progress.

Thank you once again for making us feel so welcome. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi,

Her Majesty's Inspector

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