

Whitchurch Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109073
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	337209
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Dyer
Headteacher	S Tibbatts
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited sixteen lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents and carers who were present at the start and finish of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 52 parents and carers and 91 pupils.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly that of higher-attaining pupils and all pupils in English at Key Stage 2
- how well the teaching takes account of the needs of these groups of pupils and how well teachers help all pupils to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the curriculum at motivating and inspiring all pupils and providing challenge for the most able
- the effectiveness of all leaders in checking attainment, progress and teaching and contributing to the school's improvement.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties including those with a statement, is lower than is typically found.

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

This is a good school. It is steadily improving and serves its community well. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'This is a great school ... staff have created a positive place for learning.' Pupils achieve well, not just because teaching and learning are good but also because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high.

A reason for the school's success is the thoughtful leadership and ambition of the headteacher which is shared by all staff and governors. There is a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved, coupled with a total absence of complacency. School self-evaluation is accurate. Most importantly, the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey towards excellence and this, together with the successful action leaders have taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection, means the capacity to improve further is good

Children join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly those expected for their age. Progress through the school is good and attainment is above average by Year 6 because the great majority of pupils are being actively challenged and supported well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and often very good, progress. The attainment of some high-attaining pupils, however, especially in English, is not as high as it could be. The progress of children in the Reception class is held back because the outdoor area has not been developed as well as it should.

A very positive atmosphere permeates the school and relationships are exceptionally strong. This, together with excellent care, guidance and support, results in happy learners. Consequently, pupils have a high regard for both their classmates and for the adults who work with them. All adults work together extremely well to ensure that all pupils, whatever their difficulties or disabilities, are able to take full advantage of everything the school has to offer. Pupils have an excellent understanding for their age as to how to stay safe. Their joy of school is palpable and is evident in the ever improving attendance rate, which is well above average. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they are confident, well-rounded young people, ready to play their full part in the world beyond school.

The curriculum ensures that learning is meaningful and fun. It matches pupils' needs well. Links between subjects are being increasingly exploited to provide even more opportunities for pupils to practise skills such as literacy and numeracy as well as those of research and enquiry. Teachers ensure that when pupils get to school they are very well motivated and are eager to contribute to lessons. Teachers mark books carefully and regularly but the advice they give to pupils as to how to improve their work is of

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inconsistent quality. Staff recognise that there is still room to 'fine tune' the use of assessment information to ensure that the tasks they set in lessons provide maximum challenge for the high-flying pupils. Limited opportunities for these pupils to practise lengthy pieces of writing prevent more of them reaching the highest levels in English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of higher attaining pupils in English by providing more opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing on a wide range of topics.
- Improve aspects of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers specifically plan for, and extend, the learning of the highest attainers
 - making sure that teachers' marking consistently gives pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve further.
- Develop the outside learning areas for the Reception class so that they are used more effectively for developing all areas of children's learning and, in particular, provide more high quality equipment to extend pupils' physical development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of consistently good progress. Pupils greatly enjoy school, grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. Boys and girls achieve well because most teachers expect much of their pupils and explain complicated ideas well. In an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils were learning at a blistering pace because of the teacher's exceptionally high expectations of what she wanted them to learn and the challenging and fun tasks she set for them. Too few pupils, however, are working at the highest levels in English. The school is very conscious of the needs of all pupils and so there is very little difference in the progress made by most groups of pupils. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment make similar progress to that of their classmates. Progress is relatively slower in writing for some higher-attaining pupils across the school.

Pupils' well-developed understanding of right and wrong is reflected in their good, and often impeccable, behaviour around the school. Pupils are lively, questioning and were keen to engage inspectors in conversation about their school. They have been taught how to develop their independent learning skills, yet work cooperatively, having highly developed skills of listening, taking turns and giving and receiving positive criticism. This, together with above-average standards in the key skills of English and mathematics, means that they are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Pupils readily explain the value of adopting healthy lifestyles, the need for exercise and have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in school and the wider community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Parents agree that children are looked after exceptionally well. Child protection procedures are rigorous and the care for vulnerable pupils is outstanding. Excellent links with specialists help pupils with their learning, social skills and emotional development. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially strong and helps them to make good, and sometimes excellent, progress. The curriculum contributes positively to pupils' good learning and personal development. Learning is meaningful because the school increasingly and carefully plans themes with strong links between subjects. Visits and visitors significantly enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world and make a valuable contribution to pupils' high levels of enjoyment.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and create a well-ordered and calm environment. Teachers are good at telling pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Where teaching is less effective, learning and progress are hampered because teachers do not set tasks that adequately match the range of abilities in the class or build on pupils' prior knowledge, with the result that some higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough. The school has set up thorough systems to check on pupils' progress. These are now used consistently well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and to enable teachers to set the next steps for

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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each pupil's learning. This is not, however, always made explicit in teachers' marking of pupils' work.

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
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Clear-sighted leaders and managers are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher has led the school for a number of years with unflagging enthusiasm and determination. She works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities and communicates her high expectations clearly to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. The senior team checks the school's performance rigorously and offers constructive advice and training. In this way, the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. A climate has been created where everyone is trying hard to make the school even better. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. Members of the senior leadership team and the subject leaders fulfil their responsibilities well. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the gains of recent years. In this way, the school promotes equality for all pupils. The governing body fulfils all its legal obligations and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff as all safeguarding arrangements were found to be effective at the time of the inspection. It holds the school to account well for its work. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the views of others and that a set of common shared values is embedded in every child. There is good involvement with the local community and an excellent range of links with schools in other countries. There is a clear recognition that, because the school is situated in a predominantly White British community, it should be developing more effective ways of widening pupils' first-hand experiences of the range of cultures present in the United Kingdom today.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into Reception quickly, are keen to learn, play together well and are well behaved. Staff provide well for children's welfare. In class, children have access to a varied range of activities which support their personal development as well as their communication, language and literacy skills, creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff make good use of these facilities but are hampered from extending learning in the outside area. This is because there are insufficient high-quality outdoor resources for the children to improve their climbing, clambering and physical skills. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Phonics (the learning of letters and sounds) are taught daily. Adults generally support children well and their explanations are clear, although opportunities are missed to develop children's mathematical skills in the outdoor area. All adults make observations of children and carefully assess their learning. However, this information is not always used rigorously enough to ensure that next steps in learning are sharply focused on children's differing needs

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those

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parents who returned the questionnaire. A number of individual comments reflected the good quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the great enjoyment of school that pupils have. The inspectors agree with these views. The numbers of parental criticisms were few and these were followed up as inspection trails during the visit. For instance, a minority of parents felt that the school could keep them better informed about their child's progress and involve them more in decisions that are taken at school. Inspectors agree with these views and the school recognises that it can do more to communicate more effectively with parents. The views of the parents interviewed informally in the playground confirm the positive responses in the questionnaires

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitchurch 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 inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	46	27	52	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	52	19	37	2	4	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	19	31	60	6	12	3	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	19	33	63	5	10	3	6
The teaching is good at this school	14	27	33	63	3	6	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	21	28	54	9	17	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	33	30	58	5	10	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)	10	19	32	62	6	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	25	30	58	5	10	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	10	29	56	9	17	7	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	10	27	52	10	19	4	8
The school is led and managed effectively	12	23	25	48	8	15	4	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	33	26	50	4	8	3	6

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitchurch Primary School, Bristol BS14 0PT

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. What a lovely two days we had! We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Whitchurch is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. Here are some of the really good things we found out about it.

- Your personal development is good. You behave well around the school and in your classes and you look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult
- You make good progress as you move through the school and your achievement is getting better all the time. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards that are higher than those in most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you well and you also work hard.
- Your teachers and other adults take excellent care of you. They make sure that everyone feels very safe and secure. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work.
- Your headteacher, governors and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

To help them to do this, we have asked your school to do the following.

- Ensure that more of you gain higher levels in the national tests in English at the end of Year 6 by giving you more practice at longer pieces of writing.
- Make sure that in all lessons, teachers plan activities for you that really make you think and that they give you clear advice as to how you can improve your work.
- Provide good quality outdoor equipment so that those of you in the Reception class can practise your climbing and clambering skills

I am sure that you will help by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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