

Whipperley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109559
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	337318
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Reporting inspector	Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Harwin
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
School address	Whipperley Ring Luton Bedfordshire
Telephone number	01582 725868
Fax number	01582 402346
Email address	whipperley.infants.head@luton.gov.uk

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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

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, pupil assessment and tracking information, lesson plans, governors' policies, pupils' books, 49 parent and 32 staff questionnaires.

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

- the attainment and progress of pupils, including the performance of specific groups such as summer born pupils
- the evidence of pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning
- improvements to teaching, including marking, feedback to pupils and use of assessment information to plan lessons that match pupils' needs
- the curriculum transition arrangements between Reception and Year 1
- the rigour of the school's self-evaluation, including the contribution of governors, and how this translates into action to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average infant school, with three Reception classes and two classes in Years 1 and 2. Numbers have remained broadly stable since the last inspection in 2007, but the level of pupil mobility has grown. There is a new, integrated Children's Centre on site. The senior management team is unchanged since the last inspection.

Over a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is around twice the national average. Over two thirds of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, of which Pakistani and Bangladeshi are the two largest groups. Around two thirds of pupils do not speak English as their first language, around half of whom are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average.

The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Excellence in Physical Education 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

This is a good school with an outstanding feature in the care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour and effort. Pupils respond well, becoming increasingly able to work well in pairs and small groups. They clearly enjoy their learning. Children respect each other and understand the need to be safe. There is very good support for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The curriculum appeals to pupils as there is much use of new technology and it is well linked to real life experiences through events, trips and visits. Parents are positive about what the school provides and achieves, as summarised in their questionnaire responses. The comment of one parent: 'School is like a good neighbour, a part of the community that cares for the entire family', summarises the views of many. Progress seen in lessons was consistently good, based on a strong emphasis on assessing pupils to support their learning. From a low starting point, pupils get off to a good start in the well-managed Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. This represents good progress across the school. Nevertheless, there is room for further improvement. Despite being in the school for the same length of time as their classmates, summer born pupils' attainment is markedly below the levels reached by summer born pupils nationally. This phenomenon has occurred for a number of years.

The school has improved considerably since it was last inspected. The tracking of the progress of individuals and most groups, and target setting in the core subjects, are now well developed. The quality of teachers' marking, and the contribution of subject leaders have improved. Governors are very supportive of the school but recognise they could do more to develop their ability to evaluate its improvement plans. The headteacher has built a strong, cohesive team of staff who work well together. Based on this track record of improvement, the capable leadership of the headteacher, good teamwork and pupils' good progress in lessons, it is clear that the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment of summer born pupils by:
 - acting on an improved understanding of how their attainment and progress develop as they go through school
 - seeking out national best practice in relation to the attainment and progress of

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summer born pupils by age 7.

- Improve the way in which governors evaluate the work of the school by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of improvement work is based on an evaluation of performance against measurable, target outcomes.

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

Pupils' good attitudes in lessons show how much they enjoy learning and school. They listen carefully, behave well and work hard so that they achieve well. Inspectors saw pupils making consistently good progress in lessons.

Pupils make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. When they start in Reception, many children have skills and knowledge that are below those typical of children of their age. By the time they leave Reception, most groups of children have made good progress although many are still not quite at the level expected for their age. They continue to progress well in Key Stage 1 and, by the time they leave school in Year 2, the majority reach the standards expected for their age. The one exception is summer born pupils who attain below that of their peers nationally. In recent years, standards have varied between year groups and subjects and been lowered by the impact of growing levels of pupil mobility. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Pupils told inspectors they felt safe in all places and at all times in school and that name calling or other forms of anti-social behaviour was minimal. Pupils develop good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and this shines through in their sensible attitudes to each other and their community.

Pupils are well-informed about how to keep healthy and participation rates in physical activities are high. The school has tried hard to encourage pupils to eat healthily at lunchtimes and this has had a significant effect with most pupils.

The overall rate of attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils develop a good work ethic and they are punctual and polite and work well in pairs and small groups.

Pupils with a wide range of backgrounds and abilities are all proud of their school and become increasingly keen and able to make a contribution to it. There is an active school council and older pupils show their sense of responsibility as playground leaders. Pupils understand and care about the issues affecting their school and the wider world, through responsibilities in school, visits and collections for charity.

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	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	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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils told inspectors that lessons were enjoyable and interesting. New technologies are used very well to stimulate interest as well as make sure pupils have a clear understanding of the objectives of lessons. Lessons are well planned and activities are differentiated carefully to meet the needs of the range of learners. The presence of a considerable number of support staff, including bilingual assistants, positively contributes to pupils' learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding by using focused questions and the recap towards the end of lessons is well used to reinforce and deepen learning. Marking is done frequently and effectively.

In recent years, there has been an impressive emphasis on making the curriculum more meaningful and enjoyable for pupils. This is making a good contribution to pupils' progress through increasing their enjoyment and interest in learning. Highlights include the emphasis on learning through play and real life experience. In effect, many of the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are applied also in Key Stage 1. As a result, the curriculum transition from Reception to Year 1 is extremely smooth. Topic work, carefully designed to integrate several subjects into one coherent piece of work, is an important feature that is well organised both within and across year groups. The school works exceptionally well to provide a high level of care for all pupils, including a sizeable minority who need significant nurturing as a precursor to effective learning. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, is very well matched to need, both in quantity and quality. Effective guidance ensures that children make a smooth transition to junior school.

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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?

The experienced headteacher has built a strong and cohesive team. There are clear and ambitious expectations in relation to the performance of staff. The hard-working team of staff, including the sizeable number of support staff, play their part in the school's success. Morale is high and there is a justifiable belief that the school is going in the right direction.

Governors are very supportive of the school and know its main strengths, but recognise that there is a lack of rigour in their ways of evaluating the effectiveness of the school's improvement work. The school has a positive relationship with its parents and carers. It works very hard and with considerable success to reach the minority of hard to reach parents. Partnerships with community groups, outside agencies and the Children's Centre have a significant impact on the school's ability to support pupils and their parents. The school's response to community cohesion is good. It is a key part of the improvement plan and success is evaluated in terms of the impact on pupils, parents and the local community. The headteacher has developed and systematically uses good systems to track and evaluate the progress of individual pupils and most groups of pupils. This is reflected in the fact that these groups all make good progress. There is some more work to be done to establish what lies behind the weaker performance of the summer born.

The school has good safeguarding procedures in place and the importance of safeguarding children permeates all aspects of its work. Resources are used effectively to provide good value for money. The building is well maintained and decorated to provide an attractive environment that is conducive to learning.

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
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

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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 were following an induction programme and attending their Reception class on a part-time basis when inspectors visited. The children were happy and settling into the school well. Children join Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills that are low compared with national expectations for their age, especially in relation to their personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress but leave the Early Years Foundation Stage still somewhat below national expectations in their literacy and numeracy skills. Parents appreciate the high level of care and support provided that helps children settle and enjoy their time in Reception.

Children take part in a good range of purposeful activities both indoors and in the covered outside area. Teachers and teaching assistants use assessment well to plan programmes of work and activities.

The leadership of the unit is experienced, clear about priorities and now rightly plans an earlier, initial assessment of where children are in their learning so that work is well matched to children's needs from the beginning of their time in Reception.

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

Parents expressed good support for the school in the parental questionnaire. Overall, all those that returned the questionnaire were happy with their child's experience at the school. They were particularly pleased with how their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Inspectors found nothing to support the views of the few that expressed some

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reservations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whipperley Infant 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 182 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	57	21	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	57	21	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	41	29	59	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	43	28	57	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	45	27	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	43	27	55	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	39	30	61	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)	19	39	28	57	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	41	29	59	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	41	28	57	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	33	30	61	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	43	28	57	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	53	23	47	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.



28 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Whipperley Infant School, Luton, LU1 5QY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your classes. You helped us to get to know your school and this letter is to tell you what we found during the inspection.

It was nice to see that you try hard in lessons and enjoy them. You told us you were proud of your school and we agree it is a good school where the care you get is outstanding. We liked the way Mrs Griffiths leads the school and how hard all the staff work. As a result, you make good progress in your learning and in how you are developing as children. You get off to a good start in Reception and by the time you reach Year 2, you develop a good understanding in reading, writing, mathematics and in other subjects through your topic work.

We thought your behaviour was good at all times. You and your parents told us how much you enjoy coming to school. You know what you need to do to keep safe and healthy.

The school wants to get even better and we try to help them with this. Here are two things that they will be working on in the future

- we have asked the school to take a closer look at how the younger children in each class are getting on
- we have asked the governors to really check on how well changes and improvements are going.

We are sure you will continue to work hard and help the school to go from strength to strength.

Jim Griffin

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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