

# Whitstable Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118364
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339207
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Orpin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Heenan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chilton Saint
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oxford Street Whitstable Kent CT5 1DB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at tracking of pupils' progress, planning for the curriculum and lessons, school policies and procedures, records of monitoring of teaching and learning and school development plans. Inspectors also considered questionnaires returned by parents, as well as surveys from the pupils and staff.

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

- The recent attainment of pupils and the progress they have made, particularly considering groups of pupils and boys and girls.
- Whether pupils' absence is worsening.
- Whether teaching is good enough to ensure pupils make sufficient progress for their standards to rise.
- The effectiveness of leaders and governors in ensuring that improvements take place.

## Information about the school

The school is bigger than the average primary school. Most pupils join the school from two nearby infant schools. Pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of girls is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The substantive headteacher has been seconded to the local authority and the deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since September. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and is an Eco-school.

**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 school that has improved steadily since the last inspection as a result of determined and consistent leadership that has placed a strong and effective emphasis on improving teaching and learning. This has mainly been achieved through a very good system for tracking pupils' progress and providing intervention strategies to give pupils additional help when they need it. A thorough and rigorous system for monitoring and improving teachers' skills and expertise has also contributed significantly to improving lessons. A particular strength of the school is the excellent quality care for pupils, which ensures their safety and well-being. This is reflected in one parent's comment: 'I just want to say how well everyone at the school looks after our children.'

Results in recent tests show that standards are average and improving steadily, representing good progress by pupils, especially in English. This has been achieved by improving the teaching of writing and using detailed assessment of pupils' reading to identify where extra help is needed. Standards in science have varied more than in English and while standards in mathematics are rising, they are slightly lower. Standards in science have not risen in a similar way, mainly because the focus for improvement has been on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. As a result the teaching of science, and particularly the skills of enquiry and investigation, is not as good as the teaching of English and mathematics.

All of the outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being are good, including their spiritual, moral and social development, because of the excellent care provided by the school. The adults who form the well-being team provide a wide range of support for pupils who have particular challenges in their lives or in lessons; as one pupil said, 'Teachers are kind and supportive.' Pupils' well-being is also supported by a wide variety of group activities, such as social skills, friendship and self-esteem. Links with national and international communities are limited. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities in school and they make a good contribution to the local community, for example, a beach 'clean-up', but links with national and international communities are more limited and this is reflected in pupils' cultural development.

Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved, so it is now good. The curriculum is less effective because there are not enough links between subjects to make learning more relevant and meaningful for pupils.

The acting headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the school.

Leaders work hard, involving outside specialists to ensure that vulnerable pupils and others with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have very good support, enabling

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them to overcome considerable barriers and make good progress. The senior leaders and a developing governing body, together with a highly motivated staff team have clear understanding of how to continue the improvement of the school. This, together with the friendly, purposeful atmosphere, and pupils' enthusiasm for learning means the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment in science by:
  - developing staff subject confidence and expertise so that scientific enquiry is regularly included in science lessons by July 2010
  - planning a progressive programme to deliver scientific enquiry throughout the school by July 2010
  - developing rigorous and systematic monitoring procedures for teaching and learning in science by March 2010
  - reviewing assessment procedures in science to ensure that scientific enquiry is incorporated by December 2010.
- Develop the curriculum to ensure that activities are more relevant and meaningful for pupils by:
  - reviewing the current curricular plans by July 2010
  - extending cross-curricular links by July 2010
  - evaluating curriculum developments and their impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement by July 2011.

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

The overall progress that pupils make through the school has improved steadily in recent years and is now good. Pupils make slightly better progress in Years 5 and 6, but pupils' gains in Years 3 and 4 are gradually improving to match those in the older years as teaching is improving. The national tests in 2009 showed that standards are improving steadily in all subjects, and are now average, which represents good progress for these pupils from their below average starting points. The proportion of pupils attaining higher standards is above average in English and mathematics. In recent years, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and higher attaining pupils have made good progress, reflecting the successful close monitoring and intervention for these pupils. These strategies have been extended to include all pupils, so now any setbacks or problems are identified and solved early. Improvements to teaching have also had a marked effect on pupils' learning and progress. In recent years, girls have not progressed as rapidly as boys, but the gap between genders is gradually closing.

Pupils enjoy discussing and do so with enthusiasm. They work together well and are involved in evaluating their success using success criteria, to help them understand what

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they need to do next. However, the involvement of pupils in assessment is better developed in English than in mathematics and science. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, progress in understanding how to manage money, and their skills in information and communication technology (ICT), together with their personal and social skills, means pupils are well prepared for the world beyond school. Pupils say they feel safe and know that there is an adult they can talk to if necessary. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy diet and they know the importance of exercise.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

The improvement of teaching has been a key focus for the school and it is now good. Staff manage pupils well and relationships are positive and productive so pupils behave well. Teachers make good use of ICT, especially interactive whiteboards to make learning interesting and pupils' work is carefully planned, using accurate assessments to meet pupils' differing needs. As a result pupils are eager to learn. The pace of lessons is generally brisk, but sometimes one activity takes too long or pupils are sitting listening

<sup>1</sup> 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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for too long. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely, ensuring that all pupils can learn well. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are now being addressed as a result of the close and rigorous monitoring and support for teachers.

Within the curriculum, the planning of English and mathematics is particularly good. The planning for science is less consistent and does not always ensure that pupils regularly experience opportunities to explore and investigate. While there are some links between subjects, notably through the wider use of writing, other links have not been fully exploited to help make learning more relevant and meaningful for pupils. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra opportunities, such as visits by theatre groups, a wide variety of well supported after-school activities, especially in sports and music, and residential trips in Years 4 and 6.

Systems to ensure pupils' safety and to maintain good behaviour are highly effective and consistent. Pupils feel extremely safe from bullying and know that they are looked after very well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The acting headteacher knows the school well and has a good grasp of how to continue improvement. The monitoring of teaching is a particularly strong feature, which ensures that any areas where teachers need to improve are followed up through support, advice and a further check. As a result, teachers understand and agree about how to teach a good lesson. The tracking of pupils is meticulous and used to improve progress. There have been considerable changes in the governing body, which is very supportive and beginning to be more challenging. However, governors have not always been sufficiently aware of national comparisons with the school performance. Safeguarding procedures are good; all statutory checks are carried out and recorded and staff are well trained in child protection. Policies to promote equality of opportunities are appropriate; pupils generally participate in the full range of opportunities and the gap between girls' and boys' achievement is being closed. The school has appropriate policies for promoting community cohesion, although as yet little has been done to review and develop this area more widely, as the school has initially focused its attention on local needs.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about the school and there were many comments indicating their appreciation of how well their children are cared for and supported. In the questionnaire, a few parents felt that communication was not always as effective as it might be. Almost all parents agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements in the questionnaire.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitstable 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 307 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	71	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	76	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	57	29	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	60	26	37	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	61	26	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	51	32	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	51	32	46	1	1	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)	35	50	30	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	56	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	41	38	54	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	44	34	49	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	63	42	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	71	19	27	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitstable Junior School, Whitstable, CT5 1DB

Thank you for taking time to talk with us while we visited your school. We enjoyed looking at your work and hearing about how much you enjoy working at your school. You told us that you are happy at school and that you feel very safe because you know that adults look after you very well. You also like the Fruit Caf $\square\square$ , where you can also have hot chocolate, which is run by Year 6 pupils. You like your teachers and think you learn a lot. We agree that the school takes extremely good care of you.

The school gives you a good education. It does most things well, but there are two things it could do better.

Here is what we thought about your school:

Bullets need symbols

Staying safe and healthy is important to you and you know what you can do to make sure this happens.

Your attendance is satisfactory; you can help by making sure you are at school every day.

The school has improved teaching so you now learn more in lessons. This includes those of you who find learning more difficult and those who are doing really well.

The headteacher and other senior teachers know what needs to be done in order to make sure lessons continue to improve.

Here are some of the things we have asked your school to improve:

Bullets need symbols

Make sure that you are able to learn more about science, particularly being able to find out for yourselves.

Help you to learn even more by making the subjects you learn more interesting and relevant to your lives.

Most important of all, you should continue to enjoy learning and do your best in everything you do.

Yours faithfully

Susan Orpin

Lead inspector

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