

Whitefriars Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121904
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340037
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Stuart
Headteacher	Helen Woodhouse
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
School address	Boughton Drive Rushden Northamptonshire
Telephone number	01933 356351
Fax number	01933 356586
Email address	Secretary1@whitefriars-jun.northants.sch.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 three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 16 lessons and parts of lessons while visiting eight teaching staff. Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised pupils' work. Staff and pupils' questionnaires were also scrutinised, along with 148 completed by parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of teaching to ensure all pupils make sufficient progress in mathematics
- the strategies the school uses to ensure lower- and middle-attaining girls and the more-able boys progress as well as they should
- the pupils' awareness of people from other backgrounds and cultures.

Information about the school

Whitefriars is an average-sized junior school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities is well above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and gained the Activemark award. A breakfast club, for pupils from the school and the neighbouring infant school, operates each morning. This is managed by the governing body.

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

Whitefriars is a good school. There are some outstanding features, including the pupils' behaviour, their enthusiasm for school and regular attendance, all of which have a significant impact on their improving progress. Most parents are very happy with the quality of education provided for their children. The views of one parent are typical when commenting, 'A very good school which I would recommend to anyone, old and new to the area.'

Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average but improving. Pupils' English skills are a little above average and well above average in science. Their attainment in mathematics is rising, although occasionally more-able pupils in some classes are not challenged sufficiently to achieve their potential. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' better progress is due to improvements in teaching and a rigorous approach to assessing and tracking how well pupils are achieving. Teachers' planning of work is good and clearly identifies activities for all groups of pupils, and their marking of work tells pupils what they need to do next to improve. Occasionally, pupils sit for too long listening to teachers' introductions and more-able pupils do not progress quickly enough on to more challenging work in mathematics. This is an area that the school has rightly identified for further improvement.

The school provides a good range of interesting activities that stimulate the pupils' enjoyment of learning. Staff make effective use of the outside provision to develop pupils' physical and sporting skills and this is enhanced further by the employment of specialist staff. The regular teaching of French provides children with a good grounding in this subject for when they move to secondary school. There is an excellent range of visits, visitors and enrichment activities that support pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. Pupils take on considerable responsibility. School councillors discuss seriously local issues, such as road conditions and litter. House captains determine which charities each house will support and all Year 6 pupils are 'buddies' to Year 3 pupils in addition to providing reading support for younger pupils. Links between subjects are satisfactory, although neither pupils nor teachers make the best use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. Pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves is commendable and they talk enthusiastically of the child from Niger whose education they support. They have a good understanding of different cultures and religions.

Self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to drive up standards. The leadership has high expectations, and regular and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is accurately identifying where

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improvements needs to be made. The senior leadership works well with a range of consultants to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Governors are supportive but challenging, and play an integral part in the life of the school. The school has improved since the previous inspection and it has clear procedures in place to ensure improvements continue.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils' learning in mathematics further by:
 - ensuring a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity
 - enabling more able pupils to move on to more challenging work sooner in lessons.
- Improve the teachers' use of information and communication technology in lessons and provide pupils with more opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning.

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

National tests over the past three years show that pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science has been broadly average over the past three years. However, in different years, each of these subjects has been significantly above average. The school's assessments show that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average although skills in mathematics are weaker. In the lessons seen the pupils made good and occasionally outstanding progress. The school has focused on improving pupils' progress in mathematics and has had considerable success for all groups of pupils. However, a small number of more-able pupils could do even better in mathematics. Pupils' writing skills develop well. For example, Year 6 pupils produced some very thoughtful poetry as part of their work on Jewish children who were sent to concentration camps. Pupils' science skills develop particularly well, the result of good coverage of the subject, an appropriate emphasis on correct scientific vocabulary and good opportunities to undertake investigative work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well because of good identification of their needs and effective intervention strategies. Pupils' musical and artistic skills develop well but opportunities to use computers for research are limited.

Pupils' relationships with one another are very good and older pupils look after younger children sensitively. They say they feel exceptionally safe and are confident that issues such as bullying will be dealt with effectively. Pupils' thorough enjoyment for school is evident in their high attendance and in their enthusiastic participation in the activities provided. Pupils' involvement as sports leaders helps to promote active lifestyles across the school. They are particularly keen to take part in the good range of sporting and physical activities, a contributory factor in their healthy lifestyles. The outstanding work of playground monitors has been recognised by the winning of the national 'Anne Frank' award. The pupils' secure and improving basic skills, high attendance and strong social skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Very detailed assessments provide the teachers with a clear picture as to how well their pupils are progressing. They make effective use of teaching assistants who provide good support for those who find work challenging. Consequently, these pupils progress well. Teachers' planning is detailed and identifies clearly the different groups and the range of strategies to be employed. Teachers are beginning to make use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning but some are not yet making the most effective use of the resource. Teachers question pupils effectively and provide them with good opportunities to discuss ideas with partners and in groups. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Occasionally teachers talk too much and leave too little time for pupils to carry out their activities.

The range of visitors enhance the very good range of activities provided by the school. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of cultures and religions and this helps them to empathise with people from other countries. Pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted well through an effective programme, which includes visits by the Life Education bus. The school Travel Plan also promotes healthy lifestyles. Without

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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exception, all parents responding to the parental questionnaire felt their children were well looked after. The breakfast club that operates each morning provides effective care for pupils. Transition arrangements for pupils moving to secondary schools are effective, and there are secure links with feeder infant school to ensure pupils settle well when they start junior school.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Through effective monitoring, the leadership has raised the quality of teaching and improved the rate of pupils' progress. There has also been a drive to ensure learning is enjoyable and this has been successful. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a determination to improve further. Effective links developed with other schools and providers has helped the leadership enhance the curriculum. There are excellent links with parents who support the school through many fundraising activities and, importantly, through working with the school to support their child's learning. Good links with outside agencies help to promote the learning of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Local businesses are very supportive of the school's development of its outside learning environment and wildlife area. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress and timely interventions help to promote equality of opportunity and no discrimination. At the time of the inspection, there were good and well-implemented systems in place for safeguarding pupils.

The governors play an important and effective role in the life of the school. They have produced a clear community cohesion policy and considerable work has been undertaken to ensure it is implemented effectively. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the lives of people from different cultures and backgrounds internationally and the school is seeking opportunities to raise their understanding of the different backgrounds of people in this country. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and is well placed to sustain the rate of improvement.

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

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	
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	1
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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with all aspects of school life. They are particularly happy with how well their children are looked after and supported and how the school helps the children to follow a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors endorse their views. There was no pattern to any of the small number of negative issues raised by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitefriars Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	39	82	55	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	96	65	52	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	44	78	53	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	39	81	55	5	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	49	67	45	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	43	75	51	9	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	43	81	55	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)	70	47	69	47	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	43	74	50	6	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	42	71	48	7	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	34	84	57	8	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	65	44	72	49	7	5	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	55	57	39	5	3	2	1

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitefriars Junior School, Rushden, NN10 9HX

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We also listened in to your talent show auditions and were impressed with what we heard. This letter tells you what we found and what we are asking the school to do to improve.

Your attendance is very high, you behave exceptionally well and really enjoy learning.

The school is a very happy place that is providing you with a good education. You attain standards that are similar to those in other schools and you make good progress.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy.

There are many visitors who make learning interesting. You have many opportunities to develop your interests, including sports, and visits to different places.

The teaching is good and all of the staff look after you well.

Your school works well with other organisations and your parents to give you the best education they can.

Those in charge of the school are providing good leadership.

These are the things we have asked your headteacher and staff to do in order to make your school even better.

Help you to make better progress in mathematics, particularly those of you who find the work a little easy.

Provide you with more opportunities to make better use of computers to learn in other subjects.

You can help by really working hard to improve your work in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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