

Whittington CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123549
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340364
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev David North
Headteacher	Mr Sean Sibley
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
School address	Station Road Whittington Oswestry
Telephone number	01691 662269
Fax number	01691 662269
Email address	admin@whittington.shropshire.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Inspection number	340364

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and saw seven teachers. They met with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's records, policies, assessments and 63 parental questionnaires.

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

- the progress pupils make in Key Stage 1, in comparison with Key Stage 2
- whether standards in English are improving to match those in other subjects
- the consistency in the effectiveness of teaching.

Information about the school

Whittington CofE (Aided) Primary School is a little smaller than average. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the largest group of these pupils has moderate learning difficulties.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Whittington Primary School provides an outstanding education. It focuses intensely on providing the best for each child. The headteacher's philosophy is, as he says, that 'no child is invisible' and his positive attitude has enthused staff and pupils with great optimism about what can be achieved. The school is a happy environment, as many parents agree. One typical view is that 'it is a fantastic school, continuing to make improvements year on year'. Excellent links with parents keep them well informed and closely involved in many aspects of school life.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils' maturity, common sense and warm relationships with their teachers and one another make the school a calm, pleasant environment in which to learn and grow. Their outstanding understanding of the importance of a good diet and plentiful exercise were demonstrated in an assembly when numerous pupils joyously identified what one volunteer pupil needed to help him grow and thrive.

Pupils make excellent progress because they are so well taught and very keen to learn. Within this excellent picture, teaching is marginally less effective in Key Stage 1 and occasionally less challenging, so progress in Years 1 and 2 is not quite as rapid as higher up the school. Children join the school with skills and understanding that are typically below the levels expected nationally for their age, and make good progress in the Reception class. However, opportunities for independence and outdoor play are a little limited. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average, and well above in mathematics. Thorough ongoing support for pupils with moderate learning and other difficulties enables their progress to parallel the outstanding progress of their peers. The achievement of all groups of pupils is outstanding.

The excellent curriculum is enlivened and enriched by many visits, visitors and special events. Numerous extra-curricular clubs are extremely popular with pupils. Lessons are happy, stimulating and very strongly focused on learning. Sophisticated planning means that lessons provide fascinating opportunities and run very smoothly. Excellent use of assessment ensures that any slowing in pupils' progress is quickly identified and addressed. Highly committed, well-qualified teaching assistants help promote excellent learning. High quality care derives from the powerful commitment of staff and their excellent knowledge of individuals. Support for those facing difficulties is most effective, ensuring outstanding equality of opportunity.

The school has made outstanding progress since the previous inspection, which was just a few months after the appointment of the current headteacher. He has wrought a sea change, raising expectations of staff and pupils and thoroughly embedding ambition. Rigorous self-evaluation underpins these rapid developments. Governors provide strong

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

and appropriately critical support. The school's provision and its outcomes are significantly higher than at the last inspection, three years ago. Its capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010, improve progress in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently challenging, reaching the same heights as that seen in Key Stage 2.
 - By September 2010, ensure an even better start for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by planning more opportunities for independent learning, indoors and out.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Lessons observed during the inspection typically featured very effective teaching and excellent levels of enthusiasm and concentration from the pupils, promoting excellent progress, especially in Years 3 to 6. Standards in lessons and pupils' books in Year 6 were generally above average, and even higher in mathematics. Energetic initiatives by the school, particularly to improve writing standards, have raised attainment in English this year so that it is closer to the levels reached in other subjects.

Excellent support for pupils who are disadvantaged in their learning, such as those with moderate learning difficulties, ensures that they, too, make excellent progress. Regular, accurate monitoring of each pupil's progress leads to numerous interventions to support those who may be experiencing difficulties in their learning. Thus, the school gives every pupil the opportunity to make great strides.

Pupils are very happy at school, one reporting, 'it's my perfect school, out of ten I'd give it at least nine,' to the general agreement of his friends. They all report that the school is a safe place and demonstrate an excellent understanding how to avoid risks, whether at school, on the roads or going about their daily lives. They say that bullying is very limited and are confident that it will never become an issue because it is so firmly dealt with.

Pupils are proud of their school and keen to contribute it. For example, those in Year 5 take their role as 'buddies' for new Reception children very seriously. The school council, eco council and other groups mean that all pupils have the opportunity to make their voices heard. The school council is very proactive. Its focus this year is on developing assemblies and providing better outdoor play equipment. Pupils are closely involved in the local and national community, fundraising for worthwhile causes like breast cancer relief. Very strong progress in important areas like literacy, numeracy and computing, as well as in independence and teamwork, ensure pupils make excellent progress in acquiring skills that will contribute to their future lives. Attendance is above average.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of personal values and care deeply about one another. They apply their moral and social values consistently in school, making it a

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

pleasant, harmonious environment. They are genuinely curious about the wider world, happily communicating by various means with children of their own ages in different environments in this country and across the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and other adults have high expectations of pupils and use their very good subject knowledge to plan stimulating, often outstanding, lessons. Thorough, accurate assessment informs planning and offers good challenge and support that motivates pupils, because they can all achieve. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because they are engaged with the pupil-friendly tracking system and receive regular, clear targets for improvement. Outstanding planning includes innovative use of technology and interesting links across the curriculum, so making learning purposeful. The quality of teachers' questioning and dialogue is consistently high and relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Teaching is never less than good but slightly less effective at Key Stage 1, where sometimes lessons are less challenging. Teaching assistants make a major contribution to pupils' progress.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

Their interactions with pupils are pertinent and motivating. They continually assess the progress of groups of pupils, discussing this information with class teachers and feeding it into class records of progress.

The exciting curriculum links subjects via interesting themes, presenting pupils with memorable, enjoyable learning experiences. The outstanding use of enrichment days or weeks provides opportunities for personal development and promotes a culture of 'learning for learning's sake', for example through 'The Learning Challenge'. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are well integrated into curriculum plans. The use of ICT is common practice in most classrooms and this helps to prepare children for the next stage of their education and later life.

Citizenship and personal, social and emotional development are a significant element of the curriculum, promoting pupils' self-awareness and community spirit. Extensive use is made of clubs and partner agencies to provide all children with a splendid range of experiences and enrichment.

Excellent care for pupils is underpinned by all adults' very good understanding of exactly where pupils stand in their learning and development. The school works at a personal level, knowing every pupil completely. Observations and assessment data inform decisions about the degree of support needed by each one. Interventions to boost learning are invariably successful because they are tightly focused and teaching assistants are very well trained and motivated. The learning mentor works effectively with individuals and families facing difficult circumstances. Those with special educational needs and/or difficulties are identified early and very well provided for, so that they quickly start to overcome barriers to learning. Judicious use of outside expertise supports those facing more severe difficulties. Thoroughly planned, thoughtful transition arrangements ensure most pupils smoothly progress both into the Reception class and from Year 6 to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has developed a talented and committed team of managers who work closely to meet the shared goals so clearly expressed in the excellent school development plan. Many staff are involved in the school's rigorous self-evaluation so they understand where improvements are required. Challenging targets for staff and

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

pupils are regularly checked to ensure they will be met. Regular, analytical lesson monitoring promotes the best classroom practice and teaching that is consistently good or better. Pairing of teachers enables the open sharing of good practice. Good use of data ensures no pupil is left behind, excellent equality of opportunity for all and no discrimination.

Governors have good systems to monitor the school, especially through the 'governor of the month' programme that sees everyone take their turn to visit, check and feed back on an aspect of the school. Many of these visits result in action points for the school and these are addressed seriously. Governors use their strong understanding to both ask challenging questions and provide firm support. Their work to keep pupils safe contributes well to the secure environment. Safeguarding is good with clear policies and effective procedures. However, a few staff are not fully up-to-date in their knowledge of child protection issues.

The school works energetically and successfully to engage with parents and carers, as exemplified in their very positive views. There is a good flow of information from school to homes through the web site, the 'Bell' newsletter, text messaging and the ready availability of the headteacher and staff at the start and end of the day. Regular parental surveys keep the school well informed of their views and there are good methods for parents to drop off notes of their concerns at any time. These are promptly acted upon. Family learning programmes boost pupils' and parents' skills in mathematics and ICT. Numerous valuable partnerships enable the school to provide more than might be expected in its rural location. A local schools association has benefited the school curriculum in drama and sport and helped with pupils' transition into secondary school. This grouping also provides additional opportunities for gifted and talented pupils in music, drama and physical education. A strengthening partnership with the on-site independent nursery has improved practice, such as the introduction of teaching sounds and letters.

The school has been both reflective and proactive in its promotion of community cohesion. An incisive analysis of its own situation has enabled it to focus successfully on what is required. Increasingly strong links with schools in contrasting environments in the United Kingdom and across the world do a great deal to widen pupils' horizons and develop their understanding of the different socio-economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds of different communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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 partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage manager has created a strong team that ensures good practice. For example, accurate assessment leads to comprehensive tracking and detailed planning, enabling learning activities to be tailored closely to each child's needs. Children enjoy their learning experiences but there is a slight bias in favour of adult-led learning rather than child-initiated activities. This is especially evident in outdoor learning, which is more restricted than it should be in morning sessions.

The nurturing environment enables children to settle in quickly. They develop good personal and social skills, demonstrated by the way they cooperate with one another and staff and in their increasing confidence and independence. They are motivated and concentrate well. This helps them to make good progress in their time in the Reception class across all the areas of learning, and develop very good routines that prepare them well for a life of learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is monitored as part of the whole-school self-review cycle. The leader actively contributes to improving provision, for example the outside area is now much better equipped than at the time of the previous inspection, even though its potential is not fully realised. The improving partnership with the nearby independent nursery is just starting to raise children's aptitudes on entry. Parents and carers are closely involved in their children's development. They speak highly of the provision, largely because they are so well informed about it.

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

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

Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their approval of the school. All of those who returned the questionnaire were happy with their child's experience of the school. Those who spoke to the inspectors were full of praise for both the leadership and the friendliness of the headteacher. Parents and carers expressed no significant concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whittington 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	68	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	79	13	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	54	29	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	59	24	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	63	23	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	59	23	37	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	62	22	35	1	2	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)	33	52	25	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	59	25	40	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	56	25	40	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	59	26	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	76	15	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	76	15	24	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

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 pupils' 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.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whittington CofE (Aided) Primary School, Whittington,
SY11 4DA

Many thanks for the very friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet such well-behaved and mature young people. Well done!

It was also good to see how much you enjoy school. Whittington is an excellent school with too many fantastic features to list them all in this letter. Its greatest strengths are:

- teaching is outstanding because lessons are interesting and fun and you join in so well
- because of this you make excellent progress and reach above average and sometimes even better standards
- the mix of subjects and topics (called the curriculum) is excellent and we agree with you that you have a great range of clubs to go to
- the headteacher and staff work really well to give you the best at all times.

As in almost all schools, some things could be improved. I have asked the school to focus on two areas:

- teaching in Year 1 and 2 is not quite as good as higher up the school and this should be improved
- children in the Reception class should have more chances to work independently, especially outdoors.

You can do your bit to help by continuing to be so keen and helpful. Once again, thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.