

White House Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124660
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340623
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Garry Cook
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Gerrie
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan, policies and pupils' work. In addition, the questionnaires returned by 33 parents and 30 members of staff were analysed and their comments taken into account.

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

- the effectiveness of the school in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching and learning in relation to ensuring that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress
- what the school is doing to raise levels of attendance in order to continue the improving trend
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in ensuring that the school continues to improve while also preparing for amalgamation with the junior school.

Information about the school

This is an average sized infant school with a Nursery that provides a three-hour morning and afternoon session each weekday. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. A few pupils speak English as an additional language and very few of these are at the early stages of speaking English. There are also a few pupils from the Traveller community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils that have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and the Sports Activemark.

In September 2007, the school was federated with the junior school and the infant headteacher also became headteacher of the junior school from this time. The schools are due to amalgamate at the beginning of the summer term 2010.

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 where pupils enjoy their learning and do well. During the recent hectic period as the school prepares for amalgamation with the junior school, the headteacher has maintained clear leadership and direction. She is firmly committed to the pupils, their families and the local community and is determined to provide pupils with a wide range of good quality opportunities that develop their learning and well-being. She is ably supported by senior leaders, staff and governors who share her vision and determination. Pupils settle quickly in Nursery and Reception, and the good work here is built upon throughout the rest of the school. Pupils develop good attitudes, behave well and enjoy school. This helps to create a calm and harmonious atmosphere. Attendance is improving due to the concerted effort of staff and governors and close work with parents. Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Excellent partnerships with a range of schools and agencies ensure additional opportunities and support are given, so all develop well. Parents are pleased with what the school offers. As one stated in the questionnaire, 'We have found White House to be a warm and welcoming school.'

All the positive features mentioned above remove any possible barriers to learning so pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving as a result of the continuous drive by staff to develop the way they teach and support pupils' learning. In the 2009 national assessments for Year 2 pupils, standards in all subjects were broadly average. This represents good progress from starting points that are frequently well below those usually seen when children enter Nursery. Strategies to promote equality of opportunity and meet the learning needs of all pupils are helping to narrow any differences in performance between groups of pupils. The school has recently adopted different ways of encouraging pupils' speaking, listening and writing. Insufficient time has passed to see the full impact of this work but early signs are promising.

Teaching and the curriculum are good throughout the school because teachers have high expectations and develop pupils' learning systematically over time. Work is planned to match the range of ability in each class and those who experience difficulty with their learning receive good additional support. Pupils rise to the challenges set by teachers and become very involved in the practical and imaginative tasks presented. Pupils' personal and social development is good. There is a positive atmosphere throughout the school and pupils are actively encouraged to respect others. They learn about a range of beliefs, religions and lifestyles different from their own. This helps to create a supportive and caring school community. However, leaders and governors have not placed sufficient attention on promoting community cohesion, particularly beyond the school.

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Monitoring and self-evaluation are good. Support for staff and a regular and accurate review of teaching has helped to maintain good learning and progress. There is a clear programme for improvement and appropriate priorities have been identified. Together with staff, governors have prepared the school well for the next stage of its development into an all-through primary school. Staff and governors manage the school's resources well and outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are good. Consequently, the school provides good value for money. Recent improvements, effective provision and pupils' good progress, illustrate the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure standards in speaking, listening and writing continue to improve by firmly embedding the new initiatives and evaluating their effectiveness.
 - Extend the school's work in promoting community cohesion, particularly beyond the school, and evaluate its impact.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Observations during lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that pupils continue to make good progress and are working at broadly average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite recent strategies to improve speaking, listening and writing, these remain at a lower level than reading and mathematics. This reflects the usually lower standards in speech, language and communication when children enter school. Due to particularly good identification of need and very effective support, pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, those speaking English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities frequently attain higher levels than similar pupils nationally.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of the daily interaction between staff and pupils and through assemblies where all come together as a community. Opportunities to reflect on themselves and the world around them, and also sing together as a school, develop pupils' spiritual understanding well. Strengths in their moral and social development are reflected in pupils' good behaviour and their positive and polite attitudes to others. A very small number of pupils sometimes find it difficult to respond positively to the high expectations staff have of behaviour. However, because of the use of effective strategies and the good skills of staff, these pupils are usually helped to return quickly to their learning. Pupils like school and, in lessons, they show interest and enjoyment in their learning. They know their views and ideas are taken seriously, and acted upon when appropriate, for example, through the school council. They like to take on responsibilities and enjoy working together. Pupils feel very safe in school and turn to a member of staff if they have a problem or feel unhappy. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly but attendance remains only satisfactory when compared with other infant schools. This is because, despite strong efforts by staff and governors to raise attendance, a few families do not bring their

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children to school regularly and on time. While pupils develop good personal qualities such as working in groups and taking turns which contribute to their future economic well-being, irregular attendance has a negative impact on this area of their development.

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	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?

Teaching is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils enjoy their lessons and are motivated to learn. The very good relationships between staff and pupils help to create a calm environment where pupils feel confident to learn. Teachers have high expectations and usually plan lessons which are stimulating and meet pupils' needs. Activities for more capable pupils are particularly good, because they provide appropriate challenge. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use information from accurately assessing pupils' work to plan lessons which generally build systematically on previous learning. Not all teachers share the learning objectives of the lessons so pupils are clear about what they

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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are expected to do and how they can succeed. Also, there is some inconsistency in the way teachers use targets to encourage learning. Since the last inspection, the marking of pupils' work has improved and useful comments during lessons and in their work encourage progress.

The curriculum is well organised and provides learning opportunities which sustain pupils' interests and ensure their well-being. Good links between subjects ensure that pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills and make learning more relevant. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop fully their speaking, listening and writing skills in different subjects across the curriculum. Success in gaining national recognition for sports and healthy schools' status reflects good provision which develops pupils' understanding of how to live healthy, active lives. The high quality artwork on display highlights particularly good provision. Visits, visitors and themed weeks of study successfully enrich the curriculum and capture pupils' interests. Additional programmes of work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that all make good progress.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support and there is exemplary practice in the way staff care and support the more vulnerable pupils in school. Staff work tirelessly with families, pupils and a range of agencies to remove barriers to learning and sustain pupils' good progress in their academic, personal and social development. Monitoring of pupils' progress identifies those in danger of falling behind or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good support is given to ensure that they develop confidence as learners. Exceptionally good links with the junior school ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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?

All leaders and managers are ambitious, well-motivated and committed to driving improvement. They are focused on appropriate priorities and share a common vision for improvement with all staff. Their monitoring of pupils' progress has highlighted, for example, the need to develop new strategies for improving writing through drama and role-play. Staff are fully aware of the groups of pupils who may be subject to discrimination or fall behind with their learning. The good support these pupils receive and the school's promotion of equality of opportunity ensure that they do at least as well as others in school. Procedures to protect pupils and keep them safe are good. Staff

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know which pupils are at risk and give priority to ensuring their welfare. They work exceptionally well with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context but evaluation of its work to promote community cohesion, particularly beyond the school, is patchy.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in the Nursery because good links are made with parents in this well-run provision. Procedures are clear and staff are very welcoming and supportive. Children are keen to experiment with the good range of resources and particularly like being outside where they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. Children continue to enjoy their learning in Reception and do well. Teaching is good throughout. In both the Nursery and Reception, staff have a good understanding of how young children learn, and they plan together well to provide activities which stimulate interest and learning. For example, in the Nursery, the children enjoyed observing the changes in spaghetti when it was boiled with food colouring. In Reception, children had great fun in the 'dark cave' as they made shadows using torches. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between activities directed by the teachers and others which encourage children to follow their own interests. This helps children to develop skills in learning alone and with others. Welfare arrangements are good and children learn how to keep themselves and others safe by behaving well. Staff assess the children's learning and development regularly

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and are developing further manageable ways to record their findings. By the time they enter Year 1, many reach the levels expected for their age. However, some children who start school with low levels of speech, language, and personal, social and emotional development have not had sufficient time in school to catch up.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school and the experiences it provides. One or two have concerns over a range of areas such as their child's progress or how they are helped to support their child's learning. However, evidence gained by inspectors shows that pupils make good progress and good opportunities and guidance are provided to support parents with their child's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at White House Community 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	58	11	33	1	3	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	13	39	17	52	2	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	36	17	52	3	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	55	12	36	1	3	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	20	61	11	33	2	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	52	11	33	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	39	19	58	1	3	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)	14	42	16	48	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	45	16	48	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	30	20	61	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	39	16	48	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	48	13	39	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	55	10	30	1	3	2	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools 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.



3 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of White House Community Infant School, Ipswich IP1 5NW

You may remember that inspectors recently visited your school to look at lessons and to see what you are learning. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. We agree with you and your parents and think White House is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

You do well so that by the time you leave school you are well prepared to continue learning in the junior school.

Teachers make the lessons interesting so you enjoy learning.

We like the way you work with each other in lessons. You are kind to each other and behave well.

You are beginning to take on responsibilities like taking part in the school council and acting as 'buddies' at lunchtime. Well done! This helps to make the school a better place.

All the adults look after you exceptionally well so you feel really safe in school and know who to go to if you have a problem.

Even in a good school such as yours, there are things which could be improved. We have spoken with the headteacher, staff and governors and they have agreed to do the following things.

They will continue to help you improve your speaking, listening and writing so please try hard and write as much as you can, both in school and at home and try to speak clearly in sentences when talking in class.

They will also do more to help people to get on well together, particularly beyond the school, and try to find out how successful this area of their work is.

We hope you all keep on working hard and enjoy being at school. We wish you well next year when you join with the junior school.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector

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