

Whitton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124684
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340628
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob McKeown HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hamil Clarke
Headteacher	Richard Dedicoat
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observing all teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, development plans, monitoring records, pupils' work, and attainment and progress data. They also scrutinised questionnaires completed by 97 parents and carers, pupils in Years 3 to 6, and staff. About a half of the time was spent looking at learning.

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

- raising attainment and improving rates of progress in Key Stage 2 and in bridging the gap in attainment for boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of teaching and learning, in particular how well groups and individuals are challenged and supported to enable them to make suitable progress
- the influence and effectiveness of middle leaders on monitoring and evaluating provision and tackling underachievement
- attendance, behaviour and exclusion rates, and whether the curriculum is suitably relevant and stimulating to meet the needs of all pupils
- the school's capacity to improve and the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in tackling weaknesses and bringing about rapid and sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Whitton is an average sized community primary school. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection. Double the average percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; about a quarter are from Black and minority ethnic families, the majority being from Bangladeshi, other White, and mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are at the early stage of learning to speak English. The number of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is higher than is typical for this size of school. The special educational needs are mostly moderate learning, speech and communication or behaviour and emotional difficulties. A popular breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body, runs before school each morning. The school holds the Healthy Schools award. Two acting headteachers led the school in the autumn term 2009. A new permanent headteacher joined the school in January 2010. One teacher continues to be absent because of long-term illness.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This friendly school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Despite experiencing several key staff changes since its last inspection, it has sustained its strong sense of community and popularity with parents and pupils. Parents rightly believe that staff provide very good care for their children and want them to do well. Pupils also enjoy coming to school and speak positively about what it offers them - 'My school is a very happy place, I feel welcome and safe, and the staff are very caring' - was a comment written on a questionnaire completed by a pupil.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but there is too much inconsistency in their progress as they move through the school. Although Year 6 pupils receive a significant amount of support to help them catch up, attainment in English, mathematics and science remains below the national average. The school acknowledges that progress for boys and for some pupils with more acute special educational needs has been too slow in the last two years. Girls have done much better in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Many pupils from Black and minority ethnic families achieve well and reach standards that compare favourably with national outcomes. Several aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, although some are critical of the behaviour of one or two pupils who upset things for everyone else. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together, exemplifying the school's positive approach to diversity and equality. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibilities for helping out around the school and many are proud and loyal advocates of its positive features.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. A similar number of good and satisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Teaching is stronger at the end of each key stage, where pupils tend to make better progress. Leaders recognise, rightly, that a greater proportion of good teaching is required if pupils are to achieve well in all classes. Past inconsistencies in the support provided for pupils with special educational needs has affected their progress. Improvements are still required in the way pupils who find it harder to learn are identified and supported, and in the systems for monitoring and evaluating their progress. A satisfactory curriculum provides adequately for pupils' learning and progress. Displays around the school illustrate pupils' good work in art and the school's allotment project enables older pupils to work in the local community growing their own produce. There remains scope for strengthening the curriculum, particularly for boys and for able and talented pupils, for example in science, in music, in the use of computers in lessons, and through pupils engaging in an even wider range of sports activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The arrival of a new headteacher at the start of term has strengthened the school's capacity for sustained improvement. He has

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quickly got to know all members of the school community and drawn up a tightly focused improvement plan with key priorities for raising standards and accelerating achievement. The contribution made by middle leaders, many of whom are in temporary positions, is not strong enough. Their involvement in leading improvements and in keeping a check on the quality of provision and on pupils' attainment and progress has been limited. The school is well-served by a strong team of administrative and support staff, who have provided much needed continuity and efficiency through the recent changes. The accommodation is also extremely well maintained and clean; a tribute to the hard work of the site manager and his team. Resources are managed efficiently; governors keep a close check on the school's finances in order to achieve satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring teaching in English and mathematics is good in at least 80% of lessons
 - meeting more precisely the learning needs of different groups of pupils, in particular boys, those with special educational needs and those who are able and talented.
- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - strengthening the systems in place for the early identification and support of all pupils with additional needs
 - sharpening approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the support provided for individuals and groups
 - working closely with parents to involve them more in discussing and supporting their children's progress.
- Extend the role played by middle leaders in improving provision and raising attainment by:
 - providing them with training and guidance so that they perform their roles effectively
 - involving them in a systematic monitoring and evaluation programme for all curriculum subjects and key aspects of the school's work.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils make satisfactory progress from below average starting points. In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and work hard, although some would benefit from more challenging activities that better match their abilities. In the last three years,

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attainment in Year 2 has improved well to reach average levels in writing and mathematics; outcomes in reading have not improved as much. Last year, the targets set for pupils reaching the expected Level 2 were met but those set for the higher Level 3 were missed. Pupils in Year 6 did better last year in their national tests than in previous years and a higher proportion of pupils made the expected amount of progress from their starting points in Year 2. Nevertheless, there is still a legacy of underachievement that needs tackling. The school's tracking data shows while pupils tend to do well in Year 6, progress is still too variable in other year groups where some pupils are not doing as well as they should. Leaders acknowledge that a sharper focus is required on the early identification of those who are underachieving and on checking the progress of different groups and individuals. Specialist teaching support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has helped some older pupils improve their reading and mathematics this term. The school has begun to consider how it might raise the attainment of boys and provide more challenges for able and talented pupils. Some pupils who attend the popular before school breakfast club benefit from additional booster sessions in English and mathematics, others have more loosely focused learning activities organised in the computer suite.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Older pupils learn about risk and how to deal with unsafe situations in their 'crucial crew' experience. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and pupils believe their teachers are fair and helpful, which makes them happy to share any problems they might have. Pupils know about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; many eat fresh fruit at break times and about half eat the cooked school lunches. The school council provides pupils with a good forum for discussing ideas about school improvements, such as providing better furniture in the dining room and more playground equipment. During the year, pupils raise money for local and national charitable causes. Pupils' social and moral development is good and supported well in lessons and assemblies; their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is close to the national average; new challenge rewards and targeted support for persistent absentees have been introduced this term to improve attendance further. Pupils say that while only a few children are late for school, those that are, are often late.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and results in most pupils making suitable progress. Consistency and continuity in teaching have improved through the support provided by local authority consultants but have also been adversely affected by a high turnover of staff. A range of good and satisfactory lessons was observed during the inspection and the proportion of each matched the school's own evaluation. Teaching is good when all pupils are fully engaged and motivated, and learning in different subjects is linked together. For example, progress was good in a Year 6 literacy lesson in which pupils were writing letters to a professor at a museum about animals they had discovered; models of which they had previously made in a design and technology lesson. Learning is also more effective when teachers use their interactive whiteboards to display moving images, which capture pupils' attention and interest. In good lessons, the time allocated for teaching the whole class and time for group work is suitably balanced and flexible, and teachers' accurate assessments are used well to pitch the learning activities precisely for individuals and groups. In less effective lessons, able pupils are not challenged enough and have to sit for too long through a period of whole class teaching before tackling work that reflects their prior attainment. Teaching assistants are most effectively deployed when they work alongside the teacher guiding but not directing pupils, encouraging them to think for themselves and helping them to explain their understanding.

Other aspects of provision are also satisfactory. The curriculum includes the full range of subjects and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Staff are currently considering how they might link learning across subjects more efficiently and

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also develop activities that are better suited to stimulating the interests of boys. The curriculum is enriched by pupils making visits to places of interest and by having specialist rooms set aside for lessons in subjects such as art and design, and information and communication technology. A good range of after school club activities are very popular with pupils. In many respects the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. Staff show high levels of care for pupils' personal welfare and the school is a safe and secure learning environment for all who attend. Small groups of pupils are supported well in a nurture group that meets at lunchtimes. The school has been less effective recently in providing suitable support for some pupils with special educational needs, which has affected their achievement. Where support has been provided it has not always been targeted sufficiently well to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has experienced several changes of leadership since the last inspection. The appointment of a permanent headteacher brings much needed stability and continuity for pupils, staff and governors. There are still a number of temporary leadership positions in place and, while these are managed adequately, the drive for improvement is not moving as fast as it could. In the past, a small number of key leaders were responsible for much of the school's developments. Leaders now acknowledge that the responsibility for leading and managing improvements needs to be shared more widely. Currently, the role played by curriculum subject leaders is underplayed and does not include enough emphasis on monitoring the quality of provision or evaluating its impact on pupils' achievement. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs places insufficient emphasis on early identification, working closely with parents and on making regular checks on provision and pupils' progress.

There are good data systems established which enable leaders to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. These are not used precisely enough to pinpoint underachievement and highlight the performance of individuals and different groups of pupils such as White boys. Lesson observations are undertaken to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and test out the improvements made following support from local authority consultants. There are positive working partnerships with parents, local community schools and local authority services, and pupils from every family background are included and valued. Leaders know the school community very well;

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diversity and cohesion are positively celebrated and promoted. They also know that more structure is required in the school's approach to helping pupils develop their understanding and knowledge of the wider United Kingdom and global communities. All safeguarding regulations and duties are met and the school's policies and arrangements are in line with government requirements. Governors support the school well and take many opportunities to come into school to help in classes, with reading and on educational visits. Their role in challenging for improvement is developing but requires a sharper focus on the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress. The 2009 end of Reception assessments show that children's early writing skills are not as strong as other areas of their learning and personal development. Teachers and support staff are suitably qualified, work well together and show appropriate concern for children's safety, welfare and well-being. Good behaviour and positive social interaction are encouraged throughout the setting. There are good relationships with parents and carers, and staff have daily discussions with parents about their children's personal and educational development.

The learning environment provided for children enables them to undertake a range of different learning activities in the classroom and in the adjoining outdoor area, although Reception children use the outdoor space more often than those in the Nursery. There is a suitable balance between activities that are predominantly led by adults and those in which children can be independent and decide for themselves what they wish to do.

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Staff observe children undertaking their activities and capture learning points with photographs and written notes about their achievements. Planning in Reception takes account of the children's individual needs and daily phonic sessions and adult-led activities help to develop early literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Recent support provided by the local authority early years team and visits to other early years providers have helped staff improve provision. However, leaders acknowledge, rightly, that more guidance is required to sharpen the accuracy of assessments and to identify and support children whose development may be delayed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just under half of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Almost all agreed that they were happy with their children's overall experience at school. All parents and carers believe that the school keeps their children safe. A small number of parents indicated that they did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. A very small number also indicated that they were unhappy with transition arrangements and with their children's progress. Inspectors discussed these issues with the headteacher, staff and pupils and concluded that there are suitable systems in place to manage unacceptable behaviour. The school, rightly, acknowledges that some pupils should make more progress, and that improvements can be made in transition arrangements from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 and from Year 2 into Year 3.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitton Community 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	49	46	47	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	48	49	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	30	61	63	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	35	60	62	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	39	58	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	35	59	61	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	35	60	62	2	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)	25	26	57	59	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	28	64	66	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	31	54	56	10	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	25	62	64	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	26	64	66	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	40	55	57	1	1	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitton Community Primary School, Suffolk, IP1 6ET

Thank you for your help with the inspection and for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school. Thank you also to children in the older classes for completing their questionnaires; they were very helpful and told us that most of you enjoy school and feel safe when you are there.

We think your school is satisfactory; some things are good and some things need improving. Your new headteacher and all the staff and governors care for you well and want you to be successful. We were pleased to see that you all get on well together and enjoy coming to school to learn. We thought that your behaviour was good, although some of you think that the behaviour of one or two children could be better. We saw you working hard in your lessons and noticed that you have new learning targets to help you improve your work. There is some very good art work on display around the school. We enjoyed talking to the school council about how they contribute their ideas on improving things for everyone, such as organising new play equipment like the playground tyres they had had installed. It was good to see you eating healthily during morning breaks and to hear about the school allotment where older children grow vegetables.

At the end of the inspection, we asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to keep working on some improvements to help you do better, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. We also asked your teachers to try and make sure all your lessons are good ones and to keep a close eye on how well you are doing in your different subjects. We would like to see everyone making good progress and you can help with this by trying hard and doing your best.

You have much to look forward to in the rest of the year; I hope you enjoy it.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector

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