

# Wharton CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135635
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	341678
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Martin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	484
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Duncan Fitzgibbons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Muriel Lynch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Greville Drive Winsford Cheshire CW7 3EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 288110
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@wharton.cheshire.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 20 teachers in 22 lessons for periods lasting between 25 to 45 minutes. They also held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, school leaders' monitoring files, the school improvement plan, pupils' work, the school's assessment data and records of pupils' progress and attainment. They also analysed 61 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- levels of attainment when children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage
- whether the school's past evaluations of teaching, learning and progress accurately reflect the current position
- if the school has accurately evaluated the impact of recent work on the outcomes for pupils' personal development
- the impact of the work of school leaders and governors on amalgamating two schools and their teams of staff, on establishing wider partnerships and improving standards to give the school capacity for improvement.

## Information about the school

Wharton CofE Primary is a new school formed from the amalgamation of Leaf Lane Nursery and Infants school and Wharton Church of England Junior school. This is the school's first inspection. It is a larger-than-average school and currently operates on the sites of the former infant and junior schools which are half a mile apart. It will move to the junior site when construction work is completed ready for September 2010. The school draws pupils from the suburban Wharton area of Winsford. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than is normally found. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools award, the Inclusion Quality and Active Schools Marks and Extended Schools status. As a recently amalgamated school it is in the process of re-applying for the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark and Eco Schools award.

**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**

**2**

### Main findings

Wharton CofE School provides a satisfactory quality of education. In the relatively short period since amalgamation, the rapid impact of actions taken has led to more positive outcomes for pupils. Standards are broadly average, with indications from current assessments that attainment is set to improve. Pupils behave well and they have good attitudes to learning. The school has good safeguarding procedures, enabling pupils to comment readily that they feel safe. Pupils have a good commitment to healthy lifestyles and they make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well cared for and their relationships with adults and each other contribute well to their learning. The school's good partnerships enable staff to support the well-being and emotional welfare of pupils effectively. Parents and carers are happy that their children receive a steadily improving education. 'My children often talk about how much they enjoy school; they are eager to carry on with their work by using their learning journals at home', was a comment that typically represented the positive view of the great majority of parents and carers.

Pupils' achievement and overall progress are satisfactory. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enter with skills below the age-related expectations and they make good progress. Pupils achieve well in reading; their achievement in writing and mathematics is satisfactory. The teaching of writing and mathematics is not consistently good because lessons are not always well matched to pupils' abilities and their skills are not extended by linking them with learning in other subjects. In some lessons teachers' expectations are too low and not always clear; pupils do not then have a challenge to rise to and they make only satisfactory progress. Pupils' enthusiasm to learn is most evident in lessons where increasingly, though not yet consistently, teachers give them interesting and challenging learning opportunities. Pupils' progress accelerates in good, and sometimes outstanding, lessons when teachers use their assessments well, ask probing, challenging questions and adapt activities to pupils' learning as the lesson develops.

School leaders and governors have worked hard to establish the school as an all-age primary school, coping well with the disruption of working on separate sites and coordinating a large reconstruction programme. They have made accurate evaluations of the quality of the school's work. The school's good capacity to improve is demonstrated in the successful implementation of a whole-school plan to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes, the good outcomes seen in most aspects of pupils' personal development and in the current indications of a small but perceptible improvement in standards. Other work to improve the school's effectiveness, such as ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good, has not yet had time to have greater

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impact on standards. While evaluations of learning and progress are accurate, there has not been time for school leaders to collaborate on evaluating the quality of teaching accurately across the whole school; this is why leadership is satisfactory. However, it is evident that school leaders' recent action plans are focused on improving teaching and learning to raise standards. For example, in a good partnership using the expertise of consultants to help teachers improve learning in mathematics, leaders show how their good intentions are translated into positive action.

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

- Raise standards of writing and mathematics for all pupils by:
  - evaluating teaching regularly to promote more rapid improvement, so that it is consistently good or better
  - making sure that teachers use assessment information to provide lessons that are matched to pupils' learning needs and provide sufficient challenge to engage pupils' interest
  - ensuring that pupils' learning targets are clearly explained and that pupils know how to achieve them
  - improving the marking of pupils' work so it provides pupils with guidance to help them achieve their learning targets
  - adapting the school's curriculum to provide pupils with opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different areas of learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

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

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills below the expected levels for their age. After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their starting points when they entered Year 1. In 2009, Year 6 pupils reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was below the national average in 2009, current assessments show that it is set to increase this year. The school's progress tracking data and pupils' work indicate that current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve standards a little above those attained in 2009. This shows an improving picture of attainment but inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that learning and progress are satisfactory. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is too variable and is not yet consistently good in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive constructive individual support from teachers and teaching assistants.

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Pupils behave well around the school and they are eager to learn. They know right from wrong and are courteous and respectful to adults and to each other. Their appreciation of creative activities and their understanding of different faith commitments show good spiritual development. Pupils have a good appreciation of cultural diversity. They feel safe and readily recall important messages about personal safety from the advice given by the safety officer working on the new school building. Pupils are successful in developing healthy attitudes, eager to keep fit and healthy and to carry the message of the importance of a healthy lifestyle to their families.

Older pupils carry out their duties responsibly, such as organising computer equipment carefully for others to use. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, including working with Traveller children in another school to help with that school's amalgamation and by supporting a number of local charities. Pupils participate well in decision making, such as contributing ideas, later adopted by the designers of the new school building, and expressing their views to influence school matters through the good work of the school council. Pupils' attendance is average and the key skills they need to progress to the next stage of their education are satisfactory. There are few opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively but the school has plans to create more opportunities for them to use their enterprise and teamwork skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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

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## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In good lessons varied resources and activities capture pupils' interests so that they feel challenged, enjoy learning and make good progress. When teachers make good use of time, sometimes challenging pupils by defining time limits for the completion of tasks, this leads to pupils working hard. Activities such as role play, drama and partner discussions help improve communication and writing skills in good lessons enabling pupils to make good progress. An outstanding example of this practice was seen when pupils explored the 'revolting' contents of Mrs. Twit's souvenir box, a Roald Dahl character, which enriched their vocabulary and extended their writing skills. However, this good practice is not yet found consistently throughout the school and across subjects. In less successful lessons teachers direct activities too much and pupils have fewer opportunities to learn independently or take responsibility for their own learning. The marking of work is satisfactory. While there are examples of very helpful marking in some classes, not all pupils are given information that clearly explains how well they are doing and what they must do to achieve their learning targets.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs satisfactorily. Recent developments to make the curriculum more skills-based and engage pupils' interests are beginning to accelerate pupils' progress in some lessons and to increase their enjoyment of learning. As yet, this approach is not a consistent feature across the school, which partly explains why there is variation in the quality of teaching, learning and progress between classes. Additional activities and extra-curricular clubs, such as a range of sports, residential weeks for Year 5 and Year 6 and tuition to learn a musical instrument, all help to enrich the curriculum.

Staff provide good care for pupils, which helps to promote their personal and social development and their emotional well-being. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given effective support. The school works well with outside agencies to provide vulnerable pupils with specialist help and guidance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders and governors have faced the challenge of an amalgamation well while operating on two sites. They are rightly positive about the proposed move to one site in

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the near future. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses from working in strong partnership with the school to face current challenges; they are well placed to promote school improvement alongside the headteacher and to be critical friends.

Recent changes have consumed much of school leaders' time and energies but they have maintained a focus on improving outcomes for pupils. This is evident in the improvements in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. However, there has not yet been enough impact on ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good to accelerate improvements in standards. Suitable priorities for development have been identified and are resulting in improvements, for example, in the use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and to check on learning.

Teachers are beginning to plan curriculum themes together with pupils' interests in mind so that learning is more relevant to them. However, these initiatives are very recent and have yet to be refined and implemented consistently by middle leaders across the school.

Financial management is secure and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Safeguarding procedures are good. There are good partnerships with parents and strong links with the local community. Overall community cohesion is satisfactory as the school is only just beginning to develop wider partnerships through links with other schools in this country and internationally. The school has yet to evaluate the impact of this work. The talents of all individuals are valued and developed. However, equality of opportunity is satisfactory because the progress pupils make is uneven and not yet consistently good or better in all year groups.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception Year with skills below those expected for their age. They settle well into a welcoming and caring environment which helps them to make good progress in their personal and social skills. Children make satisfactory progress in their communication, language and literacy skills and good progress in other areas of their learning. Skills are below average in language and literacy but average in other areas when children join Year 1. Parents are happy that their children benefit from good care and make good progress in most areas of learning.

Children display a willingness to be independent but their choices of activity are limited by restricted access to resources, including those in the outdoor learning area. Plans are in place to address this issue when younger classes move to the new site. Children are eager learners who enjoy what they do, such as learning number- counting skills when they hunted for eggs hidden outside.

Children are keen to take on responsibility, working and playing well together and enjoying good relationships with adults. Adults work effectively as a team; they have an appropriate knowledge of children's needs and progress. Children feel safe and their personal needs are met well. The learning environment is satisfactory. Adults are adept at promoting children's positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, based on regular assessments. There are good links with parents and carers and the children receive a good induction into the Nursery and Reception classes so that they settle well into school life. Leadership and management are satisfactory, firmly focused on the children's welfare and on taking steps to improve the provision to accelerate the children's progress.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Parents mostly have positive views of the school and its work. They rightly believe that the school cares for their children well. They say, for example, that 'each child is recognised and made to feel important' and that 'children enjoy their experience and education here'. A small minority expressed the view that the school is not led and managed effectively. Inspectors found that school leaders and governors have worked hard to combine the two former schools and that they have the skills and determination

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to sustain the early improvements made. A few parents also disagreed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. While this does not reflect the majority view, inspectors discussed this with school leaders and observed that the policies and systems the school has put in place have a good impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes, so that behaviour is now good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wharton CofE 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 484 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	59	22	36	1	2	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	36	59	23	38	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	49	28	46	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	52	23	38	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	59	25	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	57	21	34	5	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	56	25	41	2	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)	27	44	30	49	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	54	24	39	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	38	23	38	11	18	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	44	26	43	3	5	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	34	56	18	30	8	13	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	61	21	34	1	2	2	3

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

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

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

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

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

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

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



23 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wharton CofE Primary School, Winsford, CW7 3EP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking with you to find out how well you think you are learning and what you liked about school. We particularly enjoyed watching the Nursery, Reception and infant children in their Easter service at church. We were also very impressed with the friendliness, courtesy and enthusiasm of your school council representatives.

These are some of the things we have said about your school in our report.

- You behave well in school and attend regularly.
- Your school is a satisfactory and improving school where you make satisfactory progress and reach average standards.
- The curriculum you follow is satisfactory. Teachers are beginning to improve the opportunities you have to learn from interesting lessons.
- You are cared for well and you told us that you feel safe in school.

To improve your school, we have asked your headteacher, your teachers and the school governors to:

- ensure that you reach higher standards in writing and mathematics
- make sure that you have interesting lessons that challenge you to achieve well
- ensure that your teachers give you guidance to help you make good progress in all classes as you move through the school.

Our inspection found that you are keen to learn. You can help your school to become better by continuing to behave well and by enjoying your learning.

Yours sincerely

Graham Martin

Lead inspector

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