

# Whipton Barton Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113093
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	357260
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jonathan Palk

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Marshall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Leggett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hill Lane Devon EX1 3JP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's planning documents, policies, minutes of meetings, the work of pupils in exercise books and assessment data for all the year groups. They considered the responses from 79 parental questionnaires and from staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Achievement across the ability range, particularly of lower-ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether teaching adequately provides for different groups of pupils.
- The impact of additional support, academic guidance and partnerships on the achievement of those that find learning harder.
- How well leaders and managers check up on improvements to ensure they are making a difference to pupils' learning.

## Information about the school

This average sized junior school has 28% of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals which is above average. Forty percent of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well above average, and very few have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning and/or behavioural and emotional difficulties. Very nearly all pupils are of White British backgrounds. There have been several changes over the past two years, including to the leadership team. The governing body manages an on-site before- and after- school care club. The school has Healthy School status, the BECTA information communication Quality Mark and the intermediate level of the International School's 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**

**3**

## Main findings

Whipton Barton Junior provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils are proud of their school, in which they feel safe and secure. Their behaviour in lessons and around the playgrounds is good. A generous pupil-to-adult ratio enables the school to provide good care, guidance and support within small groups. A wide range of choices and experiences offered by the curriculum results in pupils' good attitudes towards school which helps to build their confidence. The school's close partnership with parents and carers and its work with a range of agencies enhances pupils' safety and the curriculum well.

Standards are below but close to the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall, but there is some variation between different groups of learners. In particular, those of middle and lower-ability do not make the same progress as other groups and overall boys are doing better than girls. Progress in the first few years at junior school is too uneven because the school lacks a well-developed system for checking pupils' attainment at the point of transition from infants to juniors. As a consequence, pupils get off to a slow start, particularly with their writing. The quality of teaching is variable within and across subjects, particularly in the effectiveness with which it meets the needs of different groups of pupils and in the pace and challenge of learning activities. Recent staff training is successfully improving some elements of the quality of teaching, importantly in teaching sounds, reading and mental arithmetic. While there is much good teaching across the school, some lessons do not clarify the objectives for different ability groups and opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their thinking are restricted when teachers talk for too long.

School improvement planning is based on accurate self-assessment. In the past year there has been a successful focus on improving the achievement of the lower-ability pupils in reading and mathematics. The gap between these pupils and the more able in writing remains significant. Spelling and handwriting are weaknesses for many pupils, who often lack confidence in applying their vocabulary and organising their work. A range of initiatives has been introduced to boost literacy skills across the school. Much of this is 'work in progress', and has still to be evaluated incisively by senior and middle leaders. The impact has yet to be seen in improving achievement.

More tangible improvements have been secured in other important aspects of the school's work. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. A structured approach to assessing progress in all year groups means there is now a systematic analysis of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing. The information is being used to help teachers to plan for the range of abilities and needs in the class and direct additional support appropriately. Attendance levels have improved and there are now very few pupils who are absent without good reason. Leaders have been successful in tackling areas of weakness in the curriculum and know what needs to be done to further improve provision

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and pupils' achievements. The school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 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.

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

- Raise standards in writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4, so that these are in line with national averages by:
  - improving pupils' skills in spelling, handwriting and organising their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by:
  - securing reliable information on the attainment of pupils entering the school in Year 3
  - ensuring that the learning objectives for different ability groups are well understood by pupils in all lessons
  - ensure that lessons are briskly paced and challenging to engage all pupils in learning at their level
  - carefully deploying additional adult support in lessons to ensure maximum impact on learning.
- Check on the impact of actions taken to improve provision and achievement by:
  - immediately introducing systematic monitoring of the raising attainment plan by senior and middle leaders
  - reporting sharply against the agreed success criteria.

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

**3**

In lessons where teaching is well focused and purposeful, pupils have good attitudes to learning and a high level of motivation. In a lesson with Year 6, pupils worked well in pairs and small groups to develop their written work on the life of an inventor. They showed great commitment to the task, animatedly discussing the sequence of events they would select to help them organise their writing, paying particular attention to the key details that would convey the character of the person. In lessons that are not conducted at the same pace, and where pupils are not sufficiently engaged in activities, there is little impact on standards and those who find learning harder are not engaged.

Pupils enter school in Year 3 with attainment that is below average. In recent years, almost a quarter of pupils have not made the progress that they should and there has been considerable underachievement in some year groups in parts of the school. This is well understood by senior leaders. Better use of assessment data and the introduction of regular reviews of pupils' progress have enabled school leaders to identify where there are gaps in pupils' learning and to target support to address these issues. There have been some particularly successful initiatives, such as the one-to-one sessions for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 and vulnerable pupils across the school. Last year many of these pupils made gains at a rapid rate, particularly in literacy. In general, less able pupils are doing better in reading than they are writing, particularly since the introduction of a systematic approach

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to teaching sounds and small group guided reading sessions taken by trained support staff. Weak performance in writing continues to impact on Year 6 pupils' performance in national tests in English and this rightly remains a key priority for improvement. The weakness in pupils' mental arithmetic skills has been tackled well through extra sessions built into the school day. Results in this national test significantly improved.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. They receive good support in the learning centre from skilled teaching assistants. Many of these make good gains in their reading but for a few of these pupils, behavioural difficulties or a lack of commitment to learning limit the progress they make back in lessons.

Pupils work and play happily together. One commented that the school is 'very inclusive'. The school council is involved in making decisions about a range of issues and peer mediators and play leaders make a good contribution to ensuring that there are harmonious relationships. Pupils acknowledged that some of their peers find it difficult to behave well but they are clear about what to do if they are concerned about bullying and are confident that the staff will support them. Pupils' experiences of the wider world and other cultures have been much improved since the last inspection. They are extended effectively through, visits, participation in sporting activities and through working with a variety of visitors and their contact with international schools.

*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?

Although there have been improvements in teaching since the last inspection, variations in its quality and the use of assessment information are the key hindrances to establishing and sustaining good achievement across the school. In the best lessons the work is broken down into shorter activities with plenty of variety and time to reflect on what has been learnt before moving on to the next task. Teachers and teaching assistants are good at providing support. This sometimes leads teachers to dominate the lesson and to talk for too long with long explanations, rather than enabling pupils to challenge each other's thinking more productively on their own, or in groups. Assessment information is used to plan lessons and predict outcomes for the class, but work is not always well tailored to the particular strengths and areas for development of the lower attainers. Questioning is generally effective but is not always sharp enough to deepen pupils' understanding through , extending and tailoring the questions to suit pupils with different levels of ability. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with detailed comments that give them a good view on the next steps in their learning. Time is usefully built in for corrections to be made in lessons or to respond to the additional challenges set by the teachers. Many pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work and to identify areas for improvement. Teaching assistants provide the required support in lessons for those pupils who have short attention spans, are easily distracted or require regular assistance with instructions. However, this is not always focused on their learning.

There is a good variety of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities throughout the day. The school offers a well-managed breakfast club and after-school care club, and a range of good opportunities for pupils to attend additional teaching sessions to help them catch up with work if necessary. A wide range of additional and engaging activities at lunchtime ensures there is always plenty to do. The work of the home-school link worker is particularly effective in supporting children and families where there may be factors that prevent them benefitting in full from what the school offers. There is a strong focus, for instance, on working with individuals whose attendance is a concern or who arrive at the school on managed placements. Several parents, carers and pupils expressed their appreciation of the benefits the support had provided. One pupil for example, explained that the peer mediators 'help us to sort out our anger when we fall out'. Many parents and carers appreciate the care and guidance provided for their children, by making such comments as 'the teaching staff are approachable and deal with any concerns efficiently'.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and communicates high expectations to staff, pupils, parents and carers. She is ably supported by a re-structured leadership team and has strong support from staff. A range of improvements have been implemented over the past three years, but the pace of change has been hindered to some extent by staff changes. There is insufficient robust and challenging monitoring of many of these improvements to ensure that the impact is consistent across the school. Teaching is routinely monitored and staff are given helpful feedback but the school knows that there is still work to do to ensure that all pupils are enabled to make equally good progress. In part, this is because the focus of the monitoring is too broad and does not tackle precisely enough the factors that are holding back the learning of some groups. Planning for improvement is based on accurate self-assessment and guidance from local authority consultants. However, plans are not sufficiently clear on when the actions are to be evaluated and how success is to be measured.

The leadership team has been soundly supported and appropriately challenged by the governing body. The school community is both cohesive and harmonious. Strong links with the local and wider community are making a good contribution to cohesion. The careful planning by the governing body and school leaders to adjust the school's provision to encourage pupils to appreciate similarities and differences across a range of cultures and traditions, is ensuring there is no room for discrimination. All safeguarding procedures and policies are thorough. The school is proactive in sharing information across the full range of partnerships and frequently takes the lead on matters concerning child protection.

*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>3</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

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## **Views of parents and carers**

A very large majority of parents and carers are positive on all matters except behaviour. Inspectors found that there are a small minority of pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour. The school has good arrangements in place to help these pupils manage their behaviour in school and this ensures that pupils' learning and enjoyment of school is not unduly compromised.

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

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	42	42	53	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	47	41	52	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	41	42	53	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	37	42	53	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	41	40	51	5	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	37	45	57	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	37	46	58	4	5	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	34	43	54	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	30	50	63	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	29	42	53	7	9	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	28	48	61	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	47	37	47	4	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	47	36	46	4	5	1	1

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

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Whipton Barton Junior School, Exeter, EX1 3JP**

You may remember that a team of inspectors visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thank you for talking to us in lessons and around the school. I promised the school council that I would let you know what we are saying in our report. We decided that the school is giving you a satisfactory education and that there is much work going on to improve it in a variety of ways.

Some of you have not made the progress that you should have done in the past but the school is making sure that you can catch up if you need to do so. You told us in your letters that the adults are really good at helping you learn. We think your teachers could do more to help you improve your writing so that you can express your ideas and feelings better. It is good so many of you get involved in all the exciting activities the school offers and we were pleased you have such a good awareness of staying safe and being healthy. Many of your parents and carers told us the staff look after you well and they make time to talk to you. You are good at taking on responsibilities and we could see that the peer mediators and playground leaders really help you sort out problems.

The adults who run the school have good ideas about what to do to make it better. Some of these things are making a difference already such as the lunchtime clubs and the extra mental arithmetic sessions. We have suggested some things that the school really must concentrate on now.

- Teachers must ensure all their lessons are as good as the best.
- Those in charge must check up more regularly on what is and what is not working well in the school and show more clearly how they are going to make lasting improvements.

You can 'do your bit' by working hard on those spellings and improving your handwriting

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector

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