

# Whitby Heath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111087
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	378231
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Vanessa MacDonald

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	362
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	William Clowes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Morris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Wyedale Whitby Ellesmere Port CH65 6RJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons or part-lessons and observed 14 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation that included the school development plan, data relating to pupils' progress and attainment, safeguarding policies, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching and learning and reports written by the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors also analysed 85 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- Whether pupils' attainment and rate of progress are improving securely and quickly enough.
- How effective the provision to support rapid improvements in English and mathematics is.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

## Information about the school

Whitby Heath is a larger than average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Of the below-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, a small minority is at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average. The school has gained Healthy School status, Activemark, Artsmark and the Inclusion Quality Mark. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new deputy headteacher and has had significant and ongoing staff changes. There has been major construction work to the school buildings.

The on-site, private pre-school provision is inspected separately and the inspection report is available on the Ofsted website.

**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

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Staff and pupils appreciate the improved school building, provision is improving and pupils are provided with good care, guidance and support. There has not yet been enough time, however, for improvements that are currently under way to have a full impact on attainment outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2.

Most children enter the Reception class with skills that are below expectations for their age group. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly average for the last three years. The school has identified gaps in some pupils' learning and leaders are taking decisive action to tackle this problem and to ensure that attainment and progress improve. Some early indicators of improvement are already evident; good and outstanding teaching and learning were seen in some lessons during the inspection. In one Year 6 class, learning moves along at a rapid pace, however, the overall progress across the school is satisfactory, rather than good, and this is directly linked to the quality of teaching which is satisfactory. Leaders have introduced good strategies to improve teaching, such as ensuring work is well matched to individual pupils' abilities, and improved methods of marking. These, however, are not yet implemented effectively in every class.

Pastoral care is good and pupils respond well to this, with older pupils taking on a range of responsibilities around the school, including the roles of prefects and road safety officers. Pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality are all good, showing their enjoyment of school. Good provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage gets children's education off to a positive start. Although the majority of parents and carers support the school, and especially appreciate that the school keeps their child safe, opportunities have been missed to engage with parents and carers and to involve them more in their children's learning.

The capable headteacher, supported by a well-informed governing body and by an effective deputy headteacher, provides a clear focus on school improvement. The school has worked closely with local authority consultants, and their advice and guidance have helped to promote improvements in teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is accurate, based on systematic monitoring and rigorous assessment. Subject leaders and teams are focused on improving outcomes and provision but their involvement in monitoring and evaluation is not yet fully developed. Whilst there are examples of good practice in middle leadership, these are not yet wholly

embedded across the school. Through rigorous tracking the school has a wide range of information about pupils' progress and has implemented actions to overcome differences in attainment and progress. There are signs of improvement but the success of these actions has not been fully realised and therefore the school's capacity for continuing improvement is currently satisfactory.

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 attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, by:
  - eradicating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by enabling all teachers to use assessment that measures and evaluates pupils' progress
  - improving consistency in the quality of marking, so that it always gives pupils clear guidance on the next steps they need to take to improve their work
  - carefully matching learning activities to the needs of all pupils.
- Develop the contribution of middle and subject leaders and managers to drive improvement further by:
  - securely embedding good practice in middle leadership across the school
  - developing their role in the monitoring, evaluation and implementation of action plans.
- Extend engagement with parents and carers by:
  - ensuring that there are ways to respond more fully to parents and carers' concerns
  - involving them more in supporting their children's learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. They enjoy school and their achievement is satisfactory. They show interest in their work and are responsive learners. They enjoy working with a partner or in a group and this helps them to develop their thinking and to offer their ideas with growing confidence. Their concentration and study skills are developing well; in most lessons they listen carefully and work hard. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The rate of progress varies between classes but standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Within this picture, pupils' attainment in writing is weaker at Key Stage 1, with boys performing less well than girls in this subject. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is lower than in English. The school is aware of these differences and has introduced specifically targeted actions and programmes to improve attainment and progress with, for example, booster groups in writing and phonics (letters and sounds). Early signs of improvement are encouraging but more time is needed for these actions to impact fully in closing gaps in attainment. Assessment data for the last school year together with evidence seen in lessons and in pupils' current work all show that in English and mathematics,

progress is accelerating as the impact of improved teaching takes effect. Increasing numbers of pupils are working at least at the level expected for their age and some exceed this. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities and starting points, in line with that of their peers.

Pupils show a good understanding of issues of personal safety and parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils form good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are confident help is on hand if they encounter any problems. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and they participate enthusiastically in the range of activities provided to support their health, fitness and well-being, including 'wake and shake'. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as members of the proactive school council, house captains and environmental officers. All of this, together with their improving basic skills, contributes to preparing them satisfactorily for the next stages in their education. Pupils show a good understanding of the moral values the school promotes, such as showing empathy for evacuees in a Year 5 lesson. This is reflected in their good behaviour and considerate attitudes. Attendance has improved as a result of work with parents and carers and is above the national average.

*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:	3
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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:	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good and outstanding practice. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are planned well to take the range of pupils' needs into account and learning moves along briskly. Skilled questioning helps pupils to think through their ideas and evaluate their own learning. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were writing a detective story and continually refining and improving their work. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, activities are not as well-matched to individual pupils' needs and assessment, including marking, is used inconsistently. As a result, pupils' progress is slower than it need be. Good practice is not always shared widely across the school. The school has overhauled and improved its systems for assessing and

<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

tracking pupils’ progress and these are now rigorous and robust. This means that class teachers have a clear overview of how all pupils are doing and this is helping them to identify where extra support is needed. Teaching assistants help to support pupils’ learning effectively, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support teaching and learning. The school has begun to focus on an effective skills-based approach although opportunities for pupils to develop and apply key skills are not yet fully developed. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop sporting and musical skills and to learn a modern foreign language. A range of visits and visitors helps to promote pupils’ personal, social, health and citizenship education. Additional support programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and specific target groups ensure that their learning is improving at least satisfactorily.

The school provides a good level of care and support for all its pupils. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well-supported and their needs are met well. The arrangements for transition through the school and on to secondary education are good. A very large majority of pupils who completed their questionnaire felt that adults in the school explain how to improve their work and care about them. Attendance and punctuality are promoted very effectively. The school collaborates well with a range of agencies that support pupils’ health, welfare, social and learning needs.

*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?

The governing body and staff share the headteacher’s clear vision for moving the school forward. The deputy headteacher’s appointment has added further strength to the leadership team; he is playing a key role in helping to drive improvements forward. There are now rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils’ progress, which are being used increasingly effectively, though there has been insufficient time to measure the impact of these fully on outcomes. Although the roles of subject leaders and teams are clearly defined and focussed on raising pupils’ attainment, as yet they have not had enough time to fully implement key actions and so improve provision in their subject. Regular progress reviews give a clear picture of how much progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics and the school uses this increasingly effectively to plan the next steps in provision and to identify where further support is required. However, the quality of teaching remains uneven across the school.

The supportive governing body is developing its capacity to evaluate the school's work in the light of the impact on pupils' progress and attainment. The majority of parents and carers are positive about the care and welfare of their children, but some raised concerns about the extent to which they are involved in supporting their children's learning and how their suggestions are taken into account. Although, the school does provide information to parents and carers in a range of ways, including sending texts to alert parents and carers to specific events and providing curriculum information, there are few opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to decision-making. Close partnerships with other schools and other agencies, including the local authority, add to the pupils' opportunities for learning. The school complies appropriately with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection through good procedures and ongoing review of their effectiveness. The school is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination; there is a determination for the gaps in performance of some groups of pupils to be closed. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion through a range of partnerships and activities through local and developing global links, and recognises the need to develop these further.

*These are the grades for the 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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</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>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception classes, so that by the end of the year, overall they have reached the expected level for their age, with the exception of writing where outcomes are weaker. Their personal development is good and they become enthusiastic and happy learners with very positive attitudes. The curriculum is of a good quality as a result of the teaching team's good understanding of learning, children's development and welfare requirements. Consequently planning is firmly based on the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and on children's interests. The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a good balance between activities that they choose for themselves and those led by adults. Children were particularly enjoying being, and writing to, 'aliens' as part of the space topic. The activity encouraged the development of independence skills well. Assessment is informed by evidence gathered through close observations of the children and staff use this information well to help them plan the next steps in children's learning. Although the outdoor area is small, effective use is made of this

to support all areas of learning and there are firm plans to develop outdoor provision further. Welfare arrangements are carefully considered so that children are kept safe at all times and increasingly develop an understanding of how to keep healthy. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff. As a result, they grow in confidence, are happy, secure and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive and the staff establish positive relationships with parents and carers and keep them well informed about their children’s progress. The teaching team is strong and works together well, monitoring and evaluating provision to ensure ongoing improvements.

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

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

### Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers registered at the school returned the inspection questionnaire. This is a lower return rate than at most schools. The majority of those who replied agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. Most say that they are content with the education and care their children receive. The inspection findings support the views of the vast majority of parents and carers who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, or spoke informally with inspectors who said their children enjoy school and the school keeps them safe. Some parents and carers feel that their views are not taken into account, unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively, that they are not given enough support to help their children learn and that the leadership of the school is not as strong as it could be. Several parents and carers expressed concerns about changes in management and staffing over the recent past. Inspectors acknowledged this, but found the current situation to be stable. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good and that parents’ and carers’ individual concerns are responded to appropriately although engagement with them, including helping them to understand how to support their children’s learning, could be developed further.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitby Heath 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 362 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	47	40	47	5	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	55	33	39	4	5	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	21	49	58	13	15	4	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	29	40	47	16	19	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	32	43	51	14	16	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	31	33	39	22	26	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	34	51	60	3	4	1	1
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)	22	26	49	58	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	28	45	53	13	15	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	26	37	44	12	14	9	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	20	38	45	20	24	7	8
The school is led and managed effectively	21	25	33	39	18	21	9	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	31	45	53	11	13	2	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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 up 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 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Whitby Heath Primary School, Ellesmere Port – CH65 6RJ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We found that Whitby Heath Primary is a satisfactory school where many improvements are taking place. Your education gets off to a good start in the Reception classes and as you move up through the school you learn and grow together happily. You are well-behaved and polite and your attendance is good. You work hard in your lessons and you get on well with each other and with the adults in school. They look after you well. They have been working hard, too, to improve the quality of teaching in school, in order to help you to do as well as possible. You are now starting to make more rapid progress in your learning and we think the school's improvement drive has got off to a promising start. There are some things I have asked the school's leaders to do next because I think they will help your school to carry on improving:

- make sure that your teachers always use the information they have about your learning to plan work that helps you learn even more
- make sure that, when teachers mark your books, they always give you helpful advice for improving your work
- talk to your parents and carers about how they can support your learning and how your school could improve even further.

You can all help by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa MacDonald  
Lead inspector

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