

Whitefield Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 109576 |
| Local Authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 377946 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Joy Considine |

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

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 380 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Lynda Thompson |
| Headteacher | Marion O'Grady |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 June 2008 |
| School address | Stockholm Way Luton LU3 3SS |
| Telephone number | 01582 596108 |
| Fax number | 01582 494883 |
| Email address | whitefield.primary.admin@luton.gov.uk |

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 22 lessons taught by 15 teachers and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information and other relevant documentation, including that relating to safeguarding arrangements. They also analysed questionnaires received from 126 parents and carers as well as those received from staff and pupils.

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

- How effective are leaders and managers at all levels in raising standards and improving pupils' progress across the school, particularly in reading and writing?
- How well are teaching and the curriculum supporting the learning and progress of different groups of pupils?
- To what degree has pupils' personal development improved since the last inspection?

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average primary school as a result of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in September 2010. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than usual. There is an average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A higher than usual proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and the Reception classes. A new headteacher joined the school in April 2011 and, since the last inspection, there have been several changes to the staff team. There is a breakfast club available for pupils and the school has gained National Healthy School Status.

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

There have been significant improvements to many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. It provides pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The headteacher has worked closely and effectively with other leaders and members of the governing body to establish a common set of values, policies and practices for this recently amalgamated school. A relentless focus on raising standards and increasing rates of progress has led to pupils progressing more rapidly than in previous years, and the remaining gaps between groups of pupils are closing. Attainment in reading and mathematics has improved and is now broadly average. Pupils are now making satisfactory and occasionally good progress in literacy lessons, but not all teachers consistently provide enough guidance to pupils about how they can improve the quality of their writing when editing their work and attainment in writing remains a particular weakness.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. An increasing proportion is good, but it varies across the school. Where teaching is most effective, pupils benefit from well-planned and challenging activities that enable them to achieve well. However, assessment information is not used consistently or effectively by teachers to match activities to pupils' needs and abilities. The school provides a wide range of experiences to enrich the curriculum and pupils are able to use their reading, mathematical and information technology skills when learning in other subjects. However, they do not have the same opportunities to use their writing skills because teachers provide them with too many photocopied worksheets on which to record their work.

Pupils' personal development has improved and is now good. They enjoy school and behave well, and this is reflected in above-average attendance. They make a good contribution to their school and wider community through various events, including raising funds for good causes and singing to older residents in the locality. The well-developed arts curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school promotes community cohesion effectively. Pupils and their families are known well and the school has worked hard with parents and carers to enable them to support their children at home. The breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious start to the school day and this has helped to improve their attendance.

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is now good. The new leader has introduced changes that have enhanced provision for children and enabled them to make better progress in all areas of their development,

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including writing. She has introduced new systems to assess and record children's progress so that staff prepare activities that are better matched to children's needs. There is also more consistency in planning between the Nursery and the Reception classes so that there is a smooth transfer from class to class.

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and most have clear action plans to show how they are to further improve provision, although a few middle leaders have yet to develop their skills to improve the subject for which they are accountable. Rigorous procedures to monitor the quality of teaching have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, and consequently pupils' learning and progress are improving rapidly and strongly in reading and writing. School leaders have introduced methodical systems to record and track pupils' progress and all staff are now accountable for improving rates of progress for pupils. The school has satisfactory capacity for 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 attainment and pupils' rates of progress across the school, particularly in writing, by July 2013 by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently demonstrate and explain to pupils how they can improve the quality of their writing when editing their work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their literacy skills when learning in other subjects
 - reducing the use of photocopied worksheets
 - providing good quality examples of pupils' writing across all subjects in classrooms and in shared areas of the school.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by January 2013 by:
 - providing clear guidance to pupils about what they have done well and showing them how they can improve their work
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils, including those who are more able
 - demanding more of pupils by using open-ended, challenging questions so that they can develop their learning.

- Improve the skills of middle leaders so that they all take a more strategic role in raising attainment and achievement and improving the quality of learning in the subjects for which they are responsible.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, pupils are typically enthusiastic and where they are expected to work hard, they make good progress. In the less effective lessons, learning activities do not always fully meet their needs and this slows their progress. Pupils start school with skills well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Assessment information held by the school shows that they make satisfactory progress, although it varies between classes and year groups. The focus on reading and mathematics has been successful, but scrutiny of pupils’ work shows that their skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are still underdeveloped. Consequently more-able pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing, although their overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory and occasionally good progress throughout the school. This is because they receive additional support from skilled teaching assistants.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they behave well. They say they feel safe in school, there is no bullying, and incidents of racist behaviour are rare. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and contributing to the wider community. They have been involved in selecting the new school uniform and have worked alongside adults to create a pond in the school grounds. Pupils are adequately prepared for their future. Good attendance and well-developed social skills, along with satisfactory and improving skills in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology, make up for the remaining weaknesses in literacy skills. Pupils study and celebrate all major faiths and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual development as well as providing them with a good insight into the lives, faiths and backgrounds of others. The quality of art and music makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, the school choir, which included pupils from all faiths, sang carols and one pupil performed an American folk song on the violin to an appreciative audience of pupils and their parents and carers.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

| | |
|--|----------|
| Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils’ attainment ¹ | 4 |
| 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 |

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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|---|----------|
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' interest and inspire them to learn. In one lesson, pupils made fruit drinks of different strengths using water and juice to consolidate their understanding of ratio and proportion. In these lessons the pace is brisk and lively and this keeps pupils on task and engaged in their learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and consequently pupils behave well. Teachers set clear learning intentions so that pupils know what they are expected to learn and this helps them to make satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and this slows their progress. Although there are some good examples of where teachers use open-ended questions to challenge pupils, this good practice is not seen consistently in all lessons. Most teachers regularly mark pupils' work but they do not always provide pupils with enough guidance about what they have done well and what their next steps in learning are.

The curriculum is enriched with a good range of activities to add to pupils' interest and enjoyment. Staff from the local high school provide additional support for those pupils who are talented mathematicians and players from the local football club have provided additional coaching for pupils. The wide range of after-school clubs include art and gardening, as well as a range of sporting activities which contribute to pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The planned curriculum meets all statutory requirements with strengths in the arts as exemplified by stimulating displays of pupils' work. However, there are too few examples of high quality writing on display in classrooms and around the school, or opportunities for extended writing in different subject areas.

Staff care for pupils and ensure they are safe, and this is reflected in the quality of relationships between staff and pupils in lessons. The school actively seeks additional support for those pupils who find some aspects of school difficult to manage from time to time. There is an inclusion room which provides them with a calm environment in which they can reflect until they are able to return to their class. Consequently these pupils are now making similar satisfactory progress to their classmates, and sometimes better. An appropriate partnership with the local high school provides a smooth transition for pupils when they move to the next stage of their education.

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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?

School leaders, including the governing body, are ambitious and share a common sense of purpose. They have introduced a planned programme of monitoring, linked to staff development, which has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, but teaching is not yet consistently good in all classes. Most leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the aspects of work for which they are accountable and have implemented strategies to improve outcomes. However, a few middle leaders have not yet fully developed their skills of leadership and so their impact on attainment and progress is more limited. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is now provided with good quality information which it uses appropriately to monitor and challenge the work of the school.

Partnerships with parents and carers have improved and are now good. They are warmly welcomed into school, as was seen during a music assembly when there was standing room only. Equality of opportunity underpins the ethos of the school's work but there are still some variations in the rates of progress made by pupils and this aspect remains satisfactory rather than good. School leaders now use assessment information more robustly to identify groups of pupils who are at risk of falling behind and so they can now act to overcome any remaining variations. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory. Staff and visitors to the school are checked and procedures for protecting pupils have recently been improved. Pupils of all backgrounds respect each other and get on well together and racial harmony is a strength of the school. Discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. The school successfully promotes community cohesion and has well-developed plans to extend this by establishing links with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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 | 3 |

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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|--|----------|
| school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | |
| The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are warmly welcomed into a bright attractive environment in which they can grow and flourish. Classrooms are well resourced and provide children with plenty of opportunities to learn inside as well as outside. Currently the role play area has been transformed into ‘Santa’s Grotto’ and children thoroughly enjoy thinking about what they would like for Christmas. The new leader has introduced systems to record and track children’s progress and adults use this information well to plan the next developmental steps for individuals as well as for groups. Staff care for children and have good regard for their safety and well-being. Consequently, children feel safe and secure. They behave well and they get on well together and they are now making good progress in their learning. They are able to share and to take turns and they listen carefully to each other. There is a good balance of activities that are led by adults and those that children select for themselves.

Good links with parents and carers ensure that children settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery and Reception classes. The leader is enthusiastic and is knowledgeable about the requirements of Early Years education. She has strengthened the partnerships between the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 so that children have a smooth transition between the different classes. She has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and has appropriate plans for further development when the Nursery children move into their new classroom in the new year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the survey were positive about most aspects of the school's work. They agreed that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe and meets their children's needs. A few parents and carers felt that their children were not making enough progress and that the school did not always keep them well informed about the progress their children were making. Inspectors found that pupils are now making more progress in reading, writing and mathematics and that the downward trend is reversing. A small minority of parents and carers believed that unacceptable behaviour is not well managed. During the inspection the behaviour of pupils was good in lessons and around the school and no unacceptable behaviour was seen. The very large majority of parents and carers agreed that they are happy with their children's experience at this school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitefield 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 380 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 48 | 38 | 64 | 51 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 48 | 38 | 72 | 57 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 45 | 36 | 66 | 52 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 32 | 25 | 74 | 59 | 14 | 11 | 5 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 37 | 29 | 77 | 61 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 42 | 33 | 71 | 56 | 11 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 30 | 24 | 81 | 64 | 11 | 9 | 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) | 30 | 24 | 70 | 56 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 21 | 17 | 84 | 67 | 14 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 26 | 21 | 60 | 48 | 21 | 17 | 10 | 8 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 25 | 20 | 74 | 59 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 35 | 28 | 69 | 55 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 49 | 39 | 54 | 43 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 7 |

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 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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 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"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitefield Primary School, Luton, LU3 3SS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all and listening to what you had to say about your school. You told us that you enjoy school and that adults care for you. You said that you feel safe in school, there are plenty of activities for you to do after school, and you enjoy art and music. We enjoyed the music assembly, where you sang and played musical instruments such as the drums and the violin, and we noticed the good quality displays of art featuring your work around the school.

We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. Many of you work hard and you are making satisfactory and sometimes better progress in reading and mathematics, but we think you should be doing better with your writing.

This is what we have asked the school leaders to do to help you improve your work.

- Make sure that teachers show you how to improve your writing by demonstrating and explaining what you need to do, and by giving you plenty of opportunities to use your writing when you learn about other subjects.
- Make all teaching as good as the best by making better use of assessment information to match learning activities more closely to your needs, and by asking you more complicated questions that make you work hard.
- Make sure that teachers in charge of different subjects take more responsibility for improving your work and progress.

I am sure you will all do everything you can to make your school even better. You can do this by asking your teachers how you can make your writing better and by asking them to allow you to write more when learning in other subjects. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Lead inspector

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