

Whitehall Primary School

Johnsons Road, Whitehall, Bristol, BS5 9AT

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- From starting points which are well below those expected for their age, pupils make outstanding progress so that by the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average
- Teaching is never less than good, with a high proportion of teaching which is outstanding.
- Teachers have very high expectations and plan exciting work that makes pupils want to learn and do well.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in making sure that all groups of pupils make better than expected progress.
- Pupils take great care and pride in their work and show impressive abilities in working on their own and in groups.
- A caring and nurturing atmosphere is evident throughout the school and contributes well to pupils' outstanding behaviour, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are many visitors to school and educational visits out of school which help to bring learning to life
- Pupils take part in lots of activities which involve reading and, as a result, they enjoy reading and acquire excellent comprehension skills.
- The dedicated headteacher is uncompromising in her determination to give pupils the best education possible and she is exceptionally well supported by very effective senior leaders and the governing body.
- All leaders are highly effective and this has been central to the school improving its performance since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons. Of these observations, two were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair, a representative from the local authority, senior and subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors considered questionnaires from staff and letters from parents.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The school's work was observed and the inspection team looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's long-term plans, the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, reports on the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Carol Warrant, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Simon Bishop	Additional Inspector
David King	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families) is above average. There are currently no children from service families on the school roll.
- The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A large proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and an increasing proportion arrive at the school speaking little or no English.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils understand their next steps in learning more precisely and can judge when their learning is successful, in all lessons
 - using the outstanding teaching in the school to inspire and develop teachers where teaching is less strong.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress as a result of an outstanding learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, and activities which develop their basic skills and independence very well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the daily teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) helps the pupils to read confidently. These sessions also effectively develop pupils' writing skills.
- By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of letters and sounds well in reading new and unfamiliar words. Most pupils read fluently and with good expression.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average.
- In reading, pupils show excellent skills in comprehension, deduction and inference and they read widely across a range of subjects in order to research key information for their learning, for example in geography and history. They are developing strong opinions on favourite types of books and authors. Less confident readers receive high quality additional support in small groups and in one-to-one sessions.
- In writing, pupils show very impressive skills in their use of imagination and, importantly, in the key skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils used formal and informal language very confidently when writing public announcements linked to their topic on First World War evacuation.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding as the result of an excellent balance between the teaching of mathematical skills and strategies, and solving problems linked to real-life situations. For example, in one lesson observed, older pupils had to explain in detail to the rest of the class the strategies they would use to calculate the answer to a challenging problem. Pupils gave excellent explanations, showing their deep understanding of concepts and their ability to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- Pupils take part in daily paired- and group-work, supporting each other's learning extremely well. Their speaking and listening skills are very well developed, ensuring that pupils are confident learners. When producing written work, pupils are enthusiastic and the presentation of their work is outstanding.
- Pupils receive high-quality support from teachers and teaching assistants, who very closely match their work to their individual learning needs. As a result, all groups of pupils, including pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, make excellent progress. Pupils who joined the school speaking only a few words of English are now working at or above the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In comparison with pupils nationally, pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including looked after children, are ahead in English and mathematics when measured in average point scores at the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Training to help teachers and teaching assistants to improve their skills has been very successful. Strategies to help pupils learn are excellent. These include a strong emphasis on teaching skills, followed by problem-solving activities to enable pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge.
- In the best lessons, adults question pupils extremely well to extend their learning, vocabulary and understanding. For example, in one lesson, pupils were observed working enthusiastically on meaningful problem-solving activities which challenged their thinking. The teacher

questioned, challenged and deepened the learning of all pupils by asking them to explain their strategies to each other and the class. This promoted excellent understanding and progress.

- Teachers' marking and feedback across the school are regular and of a very high quality. Pupils are informed of what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve, and have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and correct their errors.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting, and pupils have excellent opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. During the inspection, the Year 5 classes were visiting a Colliery Museum as part of their topic work. On their return, the quality of their report writing about their visit was very insightful and of high quality, due to this excellent first-hand experience.
- In lessons, teachers plan activities that get the very best out of all groups of pupils. As a result, the needs of all are met, pupils learn quickly, and they achieve extremely well. High-attaining pupils are given difficult work to further develop their learning, which they enjoy.
- Additional adults are used superbly throughout the school. They give excellent guidance and support and extend pupils' learning in all parts of lessons and in small group and one-to-one sessions. Teachers plan appropriate tasks to ensure that the teaching is highly specific to the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including looked after children, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, they are very well supported and learn at the same excellent rate as others in the school.
- A well-organised band of parents and volunteers from the local university and business community are trained by the school to work intensively with individual pupils to help to improve their reading skills. Pupils make outstanding progress due to this very high quality support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of learning are outstanding. As a result, they are able to get on with their work very well and learn extremely effectively.
- School records show that incidences of misbehaviour are very rare, and pupils respond well to the systems and rewards for behaviour which motivate them well. Pupils' levels of cooperation in lessons are extremely high because they are given plenty of opportunities to learn together in small groups and pairs.
- Pupils speak highly and warmly about school staff. They say that the pupils' excellent behaviour makes this school 'special'. They say that bullying of any kind is very rare and that this is a school where 'everyone respects each other'.
- Pupils say they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet.
- Pupils are very respectful and courteous to each other and adults. The school successfully promotes good relations and ensures discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils are very proud of their school and say they really enjoy being there. However, some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- The school gives a high priority to encouraging pupils to attend regularly and most pupils attend well. However, a small minority of pupils, despite every effort from the school, take extended leave in term time. This adversely affects the progress of these pupils and the overall level of school attendance which, although improved since the last inspection, is below average.
- All parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) said that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is extremely well led as the result of the headteacher's relentless determination to improve the school. She is constantly looking for new ways to help pupils succeed and achieve higher standards. All staff enthusiastically work together to secure improvements.
- Procedures for checking on the school's performance provide leaders with a clear picture of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

- Senior leaders have a thorough knowledge of how well individuals and groups of pupils are learning and making progress. This information is analysed and shared with the governing body very effectively. Any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and support put in place to help them to catch up.
- There is a thorough evaluation of the impact of spending of the pupil premium grant. This group of pupils made significantly greater progress than similar pupils nationally made in 2012.
- The rich and creative curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils extremely well and makes an outstanding contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All statutory procedures to keep pupils safe are in place and there is regular and highly effective training in child protection for all staff.
- Relationships with parents are excellent. Parents spoken to during the inspection commented on the school's friendliness and the way in which they are made to feel welcome and are always listened to.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has supported the school and governing body through a range of activities, including staff and governor training and reviews of teaching and data.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is outstanding and has developed very well through training and close work with the school and local authority since the last inspection. Governors spend time regularly in school and give good support and appropriate challenge to school leaders. They keep a close check on the quality of teaching, and very effective performance management systems are in place to ensure that teachers and the headteacher fully meet their responsibilities and targets. Rewards are in place for good and outstanding performance and there are systems for tackling underperformance should it occur. The governing body regularly evaluates data on pupils' achievement to check that all groups achieve equally well. Governors have an excellent and accurate understanding of the school's performance and how it compares to schools nationally.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109132
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	401035

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Owen
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Allen
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 October 2009
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