

Whitefield Primary School

Stockholm Way, Luton, LU3 3SS

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is not enough consistently good teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- As a result standards, which are low when pupils first join the school, are still below average in English and mathematics when they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always realistic. Pupils are occasionally given work that is too easy, while at the start of Year 1 it is often too difficult.
- While books are marked regularly, teachers' comments do not always give pupils clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always ask the right questions to develop and extend pupils' thinking skills.
- Although some aspects of the school have improved since the last inspection, several new leaders have not yet had sufficient impact on the overall quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are keen to learn in class, and are generally well behaved. They feel safe in the school.
- The teachers have good relationships with the pupils and provide them with an interesting range of activities which capture and hold pupils' interest.
- Pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is good.
- Children in Nursery and Reception are taught well, and enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities.
- The school works well with a range of agencies to support vulnerable children.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, six of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 52 members of staff. There were only seven responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, so inspectors took account of the school's most recent parental survey. Inspectors met parents at the end of an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plan, documents relating to the management of staff performance, behaviour records, exclusion records, safeguarding records and education welfare officer reports.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, displays of pupils' work, checked on the reading skills of pupils and looked closely at school's assessments of the progress being made by pupils.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and local authority, midday supervisors and family support workers.

Inspection team

Judith Olivier, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mike Thompson	Additional Inspector
Jane Richmond	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Whitefield Primary school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Around a third of the pupils are White British. A well above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which specify the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a significant number of changes at senior, subject and other leadership levels. The current deputy headteacher has been in post since September 2013, as has one of the two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs leader. The mathematics leader took up her role in October 2013.
- There have also been a large number of staff changes. Three members of staff left in July 2013, one not returning in September 2013, and a further teacher left in October 2013. At present, the school has five newly qualified teachers, and one long-term supply teacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better across the school in order to raise attainment for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - work is set at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities so that it is challenging but achievable
 - teachers ask high-quality questions to assess pupils' learning, and to extend and deepen their thinking skills
 - marking shows clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work, and teachers then check to make sure pupils have responded.
- Ensure that senior, subject and other leaders demonstrate rigour in securing good or better achievement across all year group by making sure that:
 - the transition from Reception to Year 1 is better managed, so all pupils' needs are met and they continue to make good progress in their learning in Key Stage 1
 - the skills and expertise of senior and subject leaders are developed so they can fully support the headteacher in moving the school forward.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement varies across the different key stages. Children typically start with skills that are much lower than expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, but few reach the levels expected nationally when they move into Year 1. Progress in Year 1 slows because some of the work is too difficult. Progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 also requires improvement in both English and mathematics as a result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 is below the national average, although it showed a slight improvement in 2013. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is typically below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013, pupils left the school on average more than a year behind pupils nationally in English and mathematics. However, the results were affected by the unusual circumstances of that particular Year 6 group. Several pupils had significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and a small number of the pupils had joined the school during Key Stage 2. These pupils had no Year 2 data to show progress, or were working at a very low level.
- National data for 2012 showed that all groups of pupils in Year 6, including those eligible for the pupil premium funding, had made the progress expected nationally during Key Stage 2. In 2013, the data indicated that progress was below expected levels. However, they are unreliable because previous assessment data from Year 2 were judged as inaccurate by both the present headteacher and the local authority.
- At this point, the more reliable school data for the current Year 6 pupils show they have generally made good progress since Key Stage 1, but overall attainment is still below average. Progress and attainment data have been regularly monitored by the school to ensure greater accuracy and rigour. The few more-able pupils are making the progress expected nationally.
- In 2013, the difference in attainment and progress between those supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in Year 6 varied across subjects. They were approximately six months behind their classmates in mathematics and writing, but a term ahead in reading. They also made slightly slower progress than their classmates, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language had made faster progress than other pupils in 2013, and were around six months ahead in Year 6 in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils with identified special educational needs attained around six months below the rest of Year 6 in mathematics, and approximately a year behind in reading and writing. However, this too is a mixed picture. For example, pupils with a statement of special educational needs attained higher than similar pupils nationally in all subjects, and their progress was better than that of other pupils in Year 6.
- A specific focus on the teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 has resulted in a good proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected in the Year 1 phonics screening checks in both 2012 and 2013.
- Pupils generally show good attitudes in class and this helps them to learn, as they are able to concentrate well in lessons with few disruptions. Parents are happy with their progress.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Parents and pupils feel that they are taught well. However the inspection found that, while this view applies to the majority of lessons, there is not enough consistently good teaching. Where teaching requires improvement, the work is not set at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities and, as a result, some pupils do not make enough progress in their learning.
- Teachers regularly ask pupils questions to check their learning and correct misunderstandings, but rarely in a way that challenges pupils to think hard or deepen their learning.
- The work in pupils' books is marked regularly. However, marking is not always used to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work because teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on the comments in their books or corrected their work.
- Assessment procedures to check pupils' progress and attainment have been more accurate in most classes since the last inspection, although some inconsistencies remain. The new senior leaders are addressing this issue, and all teachers are being supported in ensuring the accuracy and consistency of assessments.
- Strengths in teaching include the good relationships between teachers and their pupils. Where teaching is most effective, teachers sustain pupils' positive attitudes to learning by offering a good range of stimulating activities.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children are offered a good mixture of play and learning activities, both in the classroom and the outside area.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support and develop pupils' learning. In most instances, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves rather than becoming too reliant on adults for support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most staff and parents rightly believe that the school manages behaviour well and that pupils are safe in school. Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic about the school and the teachers.
- The pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults. Behaviour in and around the school is good and most pupils have a positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn in class, particularly in those lessons where the teaching is good. They settle quickly to all tasks, and work well in small groups.
- A small number of pupils have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the school makes good use of its 'inclusion room' to support them. Staff are sensitive to the individual needs of the pupils and support them well to access learning opportunities. The school also has a team of family support workers who work very effectively with a range of external agencies to support the more vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They are very aware of safety and know how to use the internet safely, which has been a recent priority within the school. Pupils and parents say that bullying is

rare, and when it does occur it is dealt with quickly by the teachers.

- There is a clear set of sanctions and rewards for good behaviour, which the pupils understand. They are applied consistently by all staff, including the midday supervisors, and any incidences of poor behaviour or bullying are recorded appropriately.
- There have been some fixed-term exclusions for isolated physical or extreme verbal abuse, mostly from the small number of pupils who find school and accepting adult authority very challenging. The school supports these pupils well when they return to school.
- Most pupils attend regularly and punctually. A small number of pupils are regularly absent. The school uses a good range of strategies to improve their attendance, including partnership work with the education welfare officer and the social care team, with some success. A number of families have been fined for non-attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite some improvements since the last inspection, leaders have not had enough impact in improving teaching and pupils' attainment and progress.
- The curriculum in Year 1 does not fully meet the needs of many of the pupils transferring from Reception, as they are working below national expectations and not yet ready for Key Stage 1 work. The range of subjects offered to pupils is otherwise wide-ranging and interesting for them.
- The use of assessment has improved. Where it was identified that teachers in Key Stage 1 required further training to make accurate assessments, this was provided. The school is working in partnership with another local school to ensure the ongoing accuracy and consistency of assessments at the end of Reception and Key Stage 2.
- The headteacher has done well to maintain stability during the many staff changes. All staff, including all support staff, have regular appraisals of the quality of their work. Any training needs are identified. All teaching staff are given clear targets for the quality of teaching and learning, and the achievement of pupils. In some instances, this has resulted in staff choosing to leave the school.
- Subject leaders who are new are being given training and advice on developing their roles. The school is involved in the teaching school alliance and the 'Securing Good' programme, which both offer training on raising the quality of teaching and learning.
- The deputy headteacher is now leading on assessment and has introduced more rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the impact of support provided to pupils. She is also the English subject leader. There have been good results in the phonics screening test as a result of training for all teachers.
- The school has generally supported pupils with identified special educational needs well, but the recently appointed special educational needs leader has introduced systems and training to make sure all teachers are fully clear about which pupils have additional educational needs. This has led to a significant rise in identification. These pupils' progress is carefully tracked, and the impact of any support is monitored.
- Pupils have opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom. For example, a recent visit linked to work on the Stone Age gave pupils the opportunity to understand aspects of the

art, food and life experienced by Stone Age people.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength in the school. The pupils are encouraged to work together and they show respect for the differences of others from when they first start in the Nursery.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding to provide a range of resources, additional staff and staff training to help eligible pupils. As a result they achieve largely in line with all other pupils in the school.
- The school is at an early stage of planning for spending the new school sport funding. An action plan has been drawn up and includes widening the range of after-school sports opportunities, training for all teachers and the use of external coaches.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand their responsibilities for holding leaders to account for the school's performance, and use national and school data to do so. They have accompanied the senior leaders on 'learning walks' throughout the school to gain a better understanding of the quality of teaching, attainment, progress, and behaviour and safety, in order to more effectively challenge the headteacher. They ensure that teachers' pay is tied to the progress their pupils make and have challenged previous underperformance. They know how the pupil premium funding is used and feel that this is effective in reducing the gap in achievement of pupils for whom it is received. They have recently completed an audit to ensure that the governing body has the right balance of skills in order to challenge and support the school. All governors have attended local authority training, including on safeguarding and safer recruitment, so are aware of their statutory duties and ensure they are met.

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	109576
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	425193

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Thompson
Headteacher	Marion O'Grady
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2011
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