

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITBY HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111087

Headteacher: Mr Michael Perkins

Reporting inspector: Mrs Angela Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th September 2000

Inspection number: 224949

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wyedale Whitby Ellesmere Port Cheshire
Postcode:	CH65 6RJ
Telephone number:	(0151) 355 1781
Fax number:	(0151) 356 8191
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pamela Hayward
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Angela Coyle (20603)	Registered inspector
Michael Hammond (19558)	Lay inspector
Bernice Magson (18143)	Team inspector
Daphne Crow (27324)	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whitby Heath Primary School is a large suburban school, situated on the outskirts of Ellesmere Port, in Cheshire. It serves the surrounding catchment area, which mainly consists of private housing. The number of pupils on roll is higher than it was when it was last inspected in 1996; there were 403 girls and boys in the school during the last academic year and this figure has remained fairly steady over the last two years. Children are admitted to one of the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Attainment on entry varies, but is average overall. Only three per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and only one per cent learn English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average, at eight per cent. The school has 17 per cent of its pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is lower than the national figure and three pupils have statements for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is a very effective learning environment in which pupils achieve good standards and the quality of teaching is good overall. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide strong leadership and management, and ensure that good value for money is maintained.

What the school does well

- The pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics, science, and very high standards in art. There are some excellent displays of pupils' art work around the school.
- The pupils are eager to learn and have very good attitudes to their work. They have a very strong sense of respect for others and are most courteous to each other.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; it is sometimes very good indeed at Key Stage 2, with some excellent features.
- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.

What could be improved

- Monitoring procedures are not yet fully developed for checking the quality of teaching and learning in the foundation subjects.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Since then, the school has fully addressed the key issues identified and continued to flourish. The curriculum is effectively monitored by senior staff and governors, and the daily acts of collective worship comply with statutory requirements. All policies are consistently implemented throughout the school and lessons are managed and organised well. The school development plan has been improved sufficiently so that it now provides a good management tool to help guide future developments.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	C	E
Mathematics	A	A*	A	B
Science	A	A*	A*	A

Key

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Trends show that over the last three years, pupils at the end of Year 6 consistently attained well above average standards in the National Curriculum tests for all three core subjects when compared to the national results and those of similar schools, except in the 1999 English results. This lower attainment in English was due to the fact that a higher percentage of pupils with language needs took the tests that year. The results of the science tests over the last two years are particularly outstanding and of the highest five per cent in the country. The most recent results for 2000 indicate that standards have risen even further in all three core subjects, particularly at the higher Level 5. The inspection findings support these results and show that, currently, pupils make good progress overall during their time at the school and achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science. They achieve very high standards in art.¹ The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for the future, which it is on line to achieve, and is maintaining the good standards reported at the last inspection. Children under five in the reception classes achieve sound standards in all areas of learning and their personal, social and emotional skills are particularly well developed.²

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to do well and show great interest in their work. They have sensible, mature attitudes to learning and take great pride in their finished work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are keen to attend school and arrive punctually.

Pupils' attitudes to their work are a strength of the school.

¹ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

² ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS

From September 2000, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), have introduced a set of 'Early Learning Goals for children's learning'. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language, literacy and communication; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 8 – 11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; 52 per cent was good and 22 per cent was very good indeed, with excellent features. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is notably strong, because literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning of basic skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for children under five in the foundation stage, and for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, is broad and balanced. It includes all of the appropriate areas of learning, the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are identified early and given specific targets relating to their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are currently very few pupils who learn English as an additional language and the school has clear procedures for helping pupils with their language needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and cultural development. Their spiritual and social development are also promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school values its pupils highly and provides a very warm, welcoming environment.

The school's partnership with parents is good. Many parents are involved in the life of the school and they take an active role in helping to raise funds through the parent-teacher association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership to their colleagues and are well supported by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles well. They are keen to be actively involved in the life of the school and have a firm understanding of future developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school evaluates its work systematically and uses the information well to identify further developments. The procedures for monitoring teaching and learning in the foundation subjects are not yet fully developed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The teaching and support staff are deployed very effectively and the school makes very good use of its resources.

The school is staffed by an enthusiastic team of teachers and learning support assistants who are conscientious and committed to the education of the pupils. They make very good use of the accommodation and learning resources. The strong leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and key staff enables the school to apply fully the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of teaching is perceived to be good. Children achieve good standards of work and they behave well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities and more information about the curriculum.

The inspectors agree with the above positive comments made by parents. The number of extra-curricular activities, and amount of information provided by the school, is similar to that of other primary schools and is judged to be appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics and science; they achieve very high standards in art.

1. Overall, the school has maintained the good standards achieved by pupils since the previous inspection in 1996. Pupils enter the school with average attainment in the early learning goals and they progress well to achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they reach Year 6. They achieve very high standards in art.
2. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the national average at Level 4, with a significant proportion attaining the higher Level 5. Standards were also well above average in comparison with similar schools in science and above average in mathematics. Over the last three years, the school has consistently achieved standards well above the national average by the end of Year 6 in these subjects. Although standards have previously been high in English and they matched the national average in 1999, they were well below average when compared to similar schools due to the higher number of pupils with language needs. Nevertheless, since then the school has set challenging targets for the subject and the results for 2000 show an improvement in that pupils attained above average standards. At Key Stage 1, attainment in the 1999 tests was above average in reading and science, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The inspection findings agree that overall, pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve good standards in all three core subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum, although handwriting is sometimes inconsistently developed. There is no significant variation in the progress of pupils of different abilities, gender or background.
3. Standards in art are notably very high. The subject is used well to link other subjects in cross-curricular themes. For example, the mosaic work produced on the theme of Romans links very well to literacy and history studies and shows a very high standard of artistic skill. From the time pupils enter the school, they are taught to build well on their skills. They make particularly good progress in analysing the work of famous artists such as Picasso and Hockney; many pupils are able to observe styles and techniques closely, and interpret what they see in their own work.

The pupils are eager to learn and have very good attitudes to their work.

4. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to come to school and are well behaved. Parents confirm that their children are happy: they enjoy the school and their confidence improves quickly after joining. For example, children in the reception classes were particularly interested and willing to contribute their own opinions in literacy hour activities, whilst pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed their work on mosaics. Pupils pay very good attention to their teachers and follow instructions exceedingly well. This helps them to achieve good standards in lessons. They are keen to show their work to the class and to visitors, and listen well to the views of others.
5. Children under five have good personal, social and emotional skills. They are secure in their environment and they work and play alongside one another well. They behave well, share toys willingly and try hard to please their teachers and other adults. All teaching staff provide strong role models and children try to follow the teachers' examples. There is a consistent approach to discipline across the school and pupils

respond well at both key stages. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils co-operate with their teachers in establishing conditions in which they, and others, can work productively without fear of interruption or distraction. For example, pupils take great pride in achieving merit and courtesy badges during assemblies and they are clearly motivated by the rewards. Pupils are particularly well behaved in the dining hall; the lunchtime assistants are kind, but firm, and pupils respond well. There have been no instances of bullying and no exclusions in the last academic year.

6. Relationships within the school are good. Teachers and pupils relate well to one another and the friendly, relaxed and caring ethos is built on a basis of mutual respect that children pick up very quickly after joining the school. Parental comments on this recognise the beneficial effect this has on their children's feelings and values, and speak of the 'humanity' of the school. Pupils are very supportive of one another and in all lessons are prepared to listen to others' views; this is especially well developed by Year 6. All pupils have small tasks and responsibilities to develop their independence and to learn to value and care for others; all are undertaken with great enthusiasm and real commitment. Pupils show strong respect for other traditions and cultures.

The quality of teaching is good overall; it is often very good at Key Stage 2, with some excellent features.

7. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching, which is good overall. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better, 52 per cent was good and 22 per cent was very good, sometimes with excellent features. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is notably strong, because literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught. The teaching of art is very good indeed. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning; they are keen to do well, show very good attitudes to their work and are eager to take responsibility during lessons.
8. All teachers plan in detail and identify clearly what they expect pupils to learn. The planning is thorough for children in the foundation stage, as well as for those at Key Stages 1 and 2. Members of staff plan together well in year groups to ensure a common experience and to share expertise. In the best lessons, teachers use the opportunities that arise extremely well to teach and emphasise new ideas. For example, in one lesson the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and very positive guidance helped pupils to look at Egyptian patterns whilst, in another class, the excellent ethos enabled pupils with special educational needs to progress rapidly when learning about Eritrean culture. Teachers generally have high expectations and challenge the pupils to think for themselves. Good use is made of questioning to check that pupils both understand what they have been taught and use their knowledge to solve problems.
9. Members of staff have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Specific subject vocabulary is used well and activities motivate pupils very effectively. Lessons are structured well, with regular checks made on pupils' understanding and progress. This has a significant impact upon the good progress that pupils make in their learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond well and are keen to use their initiative in extension activities that provide challenging work and extend their knowledge in geography. Most lessons are completed at a brisk pace and pupils' work is used well to demonstrate and clarify points for others during lessons.
10. Lessons are well organised and managed skilfully. This aspect of teaching has been improved since the previous inspection. Good classroom control techniques are used consistently and pupils are praised well to acknowledge success with their work. This

has a very positive effect on standards of behaviour and attainment, as pupils try hard to gain their teacher's approval. In all classes, relationships between teachers and their pupils are friendly, positive and focused on learning. Many teachers use humour effectively to engage and interest their pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils in Year 6 has a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their work. Learning support assistants are well briefed and deployed carefully to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Homework, in the form of spellings, reading and work related to class topics, is set for pupils to enable them to extend their learning. The accommodation is used very well; classrooms are tidy, well-organised environments, with resources clearly accessible. Of particular note is the excellent standard of display throughout the school; pupils' artwork is used very effectively to create a highly stimulating and colourful learning environment.

The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.

11. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership to their colleagues. Their direction for the school clearly takes account of its aims, which are to promote a caring environment in which pupils are offered a broad and relevant curriculum. High standards of learning are achieved, and where any areas for development have been identified, these form the basis of a comprehensive school development plan, which has been improved since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are delegated positively through the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. The senior managers meet regularly to discuss any issues that have arisen, or decisions that need to be made. Subject co-ordinators manage their curriculum areas well and take responsibility for overseeing the provision across the school, although monitoring arrangements are not yet fully developed. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been carefully planned and very effectively led.
12. The governors contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. They share with the headteacher and deputy headteacher a clear vision of the direction for the school's work; they are well informed, often helping out in school, and a few act as support assistants in the classrooms. Reports given by the headteacher and staff at governors' meetings keep them well informed about curriculum development, the standards achieved and quality of education the school provides. School improvements are discussed carefully and prioritised well after careful analysis of the school's provision.
13. The school has a good school development plan. It sets out a realistic and relevant way for the school to develop and improve, and is acted upon effectively. The plan contains curriculum reviews, prioritises areas for development and sets clear targets for action. It is carefully costed, sets time for the completion of targets and the action taken is effectively monitored and evaluated.
14. Careful budgeting and the efficient use of grants, such as those received for the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, have enabled the school to achieve its priorities and provide good value for money. The principles of best value are applied to all spending decisions. For example, grants have been allocated to develop a more effective use of information technology. Systems for financial administration are very efficient. The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly and receives a full update on the budget from the headteacher.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Monitoring procedures are not fully developed for checking the quality of teaching and learning in the foundation subjects.

15. The school is effective in its evaluation and development of teaching in literacy and numeracy. Subject co-ordinators for these two areas have observed lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and discussed performance with individual teachers. Any overall strengths and weaknesses are shared with staff and any individual areas for development become part of a teacher's personal development through appraisal. However, although other subject leaders give good support to colleagues through the help and advice they are able to offer, they do not yet formally monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the foundation subjects. As a result, some of the newest members of staff would benefit from more guidance to help them improve and develop their skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

16. Only one area for development was identified during the inspection. In order to maintain the good standards achieved, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - extend the current procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to include all of the foundation subjects (paragraph 15).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	52	26	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	403
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	30	33
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	57	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95	92	97
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	33	33
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	56	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	97	97
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	24	28	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	23
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	41	47	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79	90	98
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	23
	Girls	26	28	28
	Total	40	47	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77	90	98
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	3
White	340
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
	£
Total income	659,738
Total expenditure	645,209
Expenditure per pupil	1,605
Balance brought forward from previous year	96,409
Balance carried forward to next year	110,938

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	391
Number of questionnaires returned	291

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	48	10	1	1
The teaching is good.	67	31	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	9	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	27	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	49	40	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	48	11	2	10

NB: Not all parents responded to all questions and totals may not add up to 100, due to rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

Nineteen parents attended a meeting held at the school and five parents wrote to the Registered Inspector. The majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education the school provides. In particular, they feel that the good quality teaching helps their children to attain good standards. A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities and more information about the topics taught.