

Whitewater Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116345
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290510
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	118
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Harnett
Headteacher	Mr M Irving
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Rotherwick Hook RG27 9BG
Telephone number	01256 762637
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Whitewater Church of England (CE) Primary is a small rural school, serving a number of villages in north-east Hampshire. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. Children are taught in mixed-age classes in all year groups except Year 6. Almost all teachers, including the headteacher, have been appointed within the past three years. Many governors are also fairly new.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Whitewater CE Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. During the past few years, the significant turnover of teaching staff, together with some long-term staff absence, adversely affected the standards attained and the progress made by the pupils. Standards are now rising, and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Particular strengths of this school are the good sense of community it engenders among its pupils, and the good partnerships developed within the community.

Children are given a good start to their education in the Reception year group. The class teacher and nursery nurse work well together to successfully meet the challenges presented by educating Foundation Stage children alongside pupils in Year 1. Together, they ensure that children are provided with a rich diet of interesting and challenging activities. On admission to Reception, children's attainment varies considerably from year to year, but is typically above what is normally expected of four year-olds. Data relating to children's progress before 2005 is unclear. However, children now make good progress, and standards are well above average by the time they transfer to Year 1.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. There is, however, some underachievement. This is largely confined to some of the pupils in the Year 3 and 4 classes, which has been particularly hard hit by staffing difficulties. These have now been addressed.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This level of performance is likely to be repeated this year. This represents satisfactory progress, since the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 was also above average when they were at the end of the Foundation Stage. In Year 6, standards in recent years have not been high enough, and have been just above the national average. This underachievement resulted from the lack of continuity caused by the disruption in staffing, and previous weaknesses in the systems for checking on pupils' progress. The measures put in place are having an impact, particularly in targeting extra help for those who need it. Standards at the end of Year 6 are rising, and are likely to be clearly above average overall for the first time for five years.

The standard of pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory overall. Pupils behave well and have good social skills.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching, but this is mainly in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 class, and practice elsewhere is inconsistent. The curriculum is satisfactory, and is enriched by many extra activities that make learning more interesting. However, the school acknowledges that there is a lack of focus on the step-by-step development of pupils' skills in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory overall. There are strengths in pastoral care, but these are offset by inconsistencies in the educational guidance for pupils.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership has created a welcoming environment in which pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree. A good proportion of parents returned the inspection questionnaires, and these were positive in all areas surveyed. The headteacher monitors the work of the school closely and gives a clear lead. However, the management skills of other staff, particularly in monitoring pupils' achievement and progress, are under-developed. The school has not yet developed an effective management structure because of the changes in teaching personnel. For this reason there is a satisfactory, rather than a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by sharing and adopting the good practice to be found in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 class.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides for the progressive development of pupils' skills in all subjects.
- Develop the leadership and management skills of all teachers. In particular, ensure that they are involved in raising standards through the rigorous monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Currently, the attainment of children in the Reception year is well above average in almost all areas of learning, as it was in 2006. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are typically above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite changes in teaching personnel, the school has ensured that pupils make satisfactory progress in this key stage. This is because these changes were well managed, and the deputy headteacher made an immediate impact. In addition, great care is taken to ensure that pupils in Year 1 receive the same curriculum even though some are in the same class as Reception children while others are with Year 2.

The staffing disruption adversely affected the achievement of some pupils in Years 3 and 4, but this situation is now resolved and the school is able to take a long-term view. Standards at the end of Year 6, although just above the national average overall, have not been high enough in the past and the progress made by pupils over the course of Key Stage 2 has been inadequate in some years. This year however, standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and broadly average in science. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making satisfactory progress overall. There are proportionately fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than in most schools, but these pupils make satisfactory progress because they have clear individual education plans and are given adequate support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils' moral and social development is good, and their spiritual development is satisfactory. With regard to cultural development, pupils are good at celebrating their own cultural traditions, but have too little awareness of the rich diversity of cultures in Britain today.

Pupils enjoy being at school. In particular, they appreciate its family atmosphere. One Year 5 pupil commented, 'I like it here, it may not be a big school but it's a really friendly one!' Despite pupils' positive views, attendance rates are only average. This is due to the disproportionate impact of the below average attendance of a few families. Pupils play a good and full part in the life of the local community, particularly through the strong links with the local church and musical activities. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how to keep safe and lead healthy lifestyles. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, and a future as life-long

learners through their competence in basic skills and ability to work both cooperatively and independently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers relate well to their pupils, give clear explanations and instructions, and organise their classes effectively. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. It is lively and challenging, consequently children make good gains in their learning.

A weakness in otherwise satisfactory teaching in other key stages is that work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils. This particularly disadvantages the more able pupils because work is too often targeted at the middle ability range. In science, for example, samples of pupils' work showed that sometimes everyone is given the same tasks regardless of ability. This accounts for the school's relatively lower performance in this subject, particularly in regard to the achievement of Year 6 higher attainers. Inconsistencies in teaching are due to the changes in teaching staff which have affected all year groups. For example, the quality of teachers' involvement of pupils in their own learning, through self-assessment, varies considerably between classes. At present, teachers do not have enough opportunity to observe one another and share expertise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides children with exciting activities that capture their imagination. For instance, a topic about pirates provided numerous opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. Outdoor learning, for example, included work for children in testing out their ideas about which objects might float and which might sink as they decided what possessions a pirate might need to take to sea.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum provides for clear progression in learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects, teachers do not have clear enough guidance about the levels of skills to be expected for pupils of different ages. This makes it difficult for them to assess precisely how well their pupils are getting on. Good progress has been made in improving resources for information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school, and pupils now have regular opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. The excellent outdoor equipment helps promote physical activity and imaginative play.

There is a good range of enrichment activities, including peripatetic instrumental tuition. There are regular educational visits, including a week-long residential trip to France for pupils in Year 6. There is, for a school of this size, a good variety of out-of-class clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The day-to-day care provided for pupils is good. Child protection systems and risk assessments are in place and are effective. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. The staff know individual pupils very well, and a great sense of 'family' is achieved. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. All pupils have individual targets to achieve in English, and are very clear about them,

but there are no individual targets in mathematics. Pupils' work is regularly marked and their progress is closely checked. However, the written comments in pupils' English books do not always relate to pupils' targets, and teachers miss opportunities to ensure that pupils improve their work by doing corrections.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and staff work well together as a team. Together they have created an orderly and calm environment for learning. They are clearly committed to raising standards and ensuring that pupils reach their potential. At present most of the monitoring is carried out by the headteacher. This is because the changes that have occurred in staffing mean that most teachers are relatively inexperienced in having responsibility for leading aspects of the school's work. The headteacher's monitoring is good. He uses a clear system for tracking pupils' progress to check on how well individuals or groups of pupils are getting on.

Governance is satisfactory. There have been significant changes in the membership of the governing body, and many governors are relatively new. They are working hard to develop their expertise and are satisfactorily holding the school to account for its actions. Governors work closely with the headteacher and have helped ensure that issues relating to the underachievement of some pupils have been addressed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitewater Church of England Primary School, Hook, RG27 9BG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school. I am writing to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you. I am sorry that I could not meet those of you in Class 5 because you were away on your trip to France. I hope that you really enjoyed the experience.

I think that your school is satisfactory. In the past few years some of you have not done as well as you should because you had so many changes of teachers. This has now been sorted out. Most of you are now making satisfactory progress and some of you are doing well.

There are a number of things that I like about your school. First I think that you are really lucky to have such a lovely place to learn in. I particularly like your new play equipment, and I'm sure that you do too! You told me how much you enjoy school. I think that one of the reasons is that all of the adults take good care of you. Another reason is that you behave well and work well with one another.

Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school want it to be even better. Here are some things I have suggested that they should do. I would like your teachers to find out more about the different ways that they could help you learn by visiting each other's lessons. Then they can share the good things that they see with their own class. I would also like your teachers to plan your lessons in subjects like art or history in the same sort of way that they plan their lessons in English and maths. This will make sure that the oldest people in each class will get more advanced work to do. I'm sure that you are ready for the challenge! Finally, I would like all your teachers to learn more about how to be in charge of different subjects. I would particularly like them to find out more about the different ways that they could check on how well you are doing. This will help them to make your work more challenging and help you make even better progress.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Thompson Lead inspector