

Whitgreave Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104297
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	308564
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brenda Hawkins
Headteacher	Denise Dalton
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
School address	Goodyear Avenue Low Hill Wolverhampton WV10 9JP
Telephone number	01902 558930
Fax number	01902 558932

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. When the school was inspected in October 2006 it was given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement was required with regards pupils' achievement and standards.

Description of the school

Whitgreave is smaller than the average sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A number of other ethnic groups are represented at the school. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils is identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils come from the estate that surrounds the school. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well above average. A significant number of pupils either leave or join the school part way through the year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Whitgreave provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It has a number of strengths and there are clear indications that it can get even better. As one parent said, 'It's constantly improving.' Key to the recent improvement is the good leadership and management of the headteacher. She provides clear direction, is ambitious for the school and determined that improvement is sustainable and in the best interests of the pupils. Doing things in the 'Whitgreave Way' has ensured that pupils now make better progress in a very friendly and supportive environment. Consequently, academic standards are now higher.

A significant strength of the school is the pupils' personal development, which has also improved since the last inspection. This is as a result of the school's good pastoral care and the effective curriculum provided for the pupils. Pupils enjoy school. This is obvious in the enthusiasm they show for lessons and other school activities. Pupils' behaviour is good although a minority of parents expressed concerns. The learning mentor has had a positive effect on helping those pupils who find behaving in the appropriate manner a little difficult. Relationships through the school are good. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are fun, kind and helpful, even if their jokes aren't funny.' Pupils have become confident and sensible individuals who work well together and are keen to talk about their work.

Pupils now achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards overall by the time they leave school. Standards in English and mathematics are higher than in science. The previous decline in standards and pupils' achievement has been addressed. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is steadily improving. There are a few lessons, where teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils and the pace of learning is then too leisurely. Older pupils talk confidently about their academic targets and the levels they are working at. However, for some of the younger pupils, the language of their individual targets is too difficult for them to understand and the targets do not contribute much to their learning. Teachers' marking is supportive and often good at identifying whether pupils have achieved lesson intentions. However, marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work even further.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress are good. Senior managers and class teachers have a clear picture of how well pupils are doing. All teachers are more accountable for the progress of their pupils and pupils' achievement has improved as a result. There is good teamwork evident amongst all staff, and governors play an effective role in school improvement. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has improved pupils' achievement. Subject leaders are proactive and rapidly developing their roles. The school's current focus on science is moving the subject in the right direction, for example, more time is now being spent on the subject. However, it is too early to judge the impact. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The following comment, typical of many made by parents, sums up the school very well. 'The school has really settled down, we're happy with our children's progress and all staff are willing to help.' With improving standards, the pupils' good personal development, and the determination of the headteacher and staff not to stand still and be complacent, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in science.
- Ensure that all teaching is good so that every pupil makes good progress.
- Make sure that both marking and target setting contribute effectively to improving pupils' learning all of the time.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in Year 6. Following the last inspection, the school initially focused successfully on raising standards in English and mathematics. In the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Higher standards in English and mathematics are the result of improvements in teaching and a more rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress through the academic year. The school is quick to identify pupils who are not making the progress they are capable of and initiate support to help them get back on track. The school's realistic, but challenging, targets for 2008 indicate that the improvement started in 2007 in English and mathematics are likely to be sustained. The school has correctly turned its attention to science. The rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and the good support provided by teaching assistants enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make progress in line with their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. During the inspection, good spiritual awareness was shown as pupils considered issues of importance whilst looking at a lighted candle in assembly. Pupils are very aware and respectful of each other. Assemblies start with pupils saying together, 'Hello everyone – at Whitgreave we respect everyone.' Pupils speak enthusiastically about their role on the school council and the responsibility of representing others. Pupils say the council has made a difference to the school. Attendance is satisfactory. It is improving and the school has many strategies in place to help those parents who find difficulty in getting their children to school on time for example, the 'walking bus.' Pupils adopt good, safe practices, moving around the school and their classrooms with care. They talk knowledgeably about a healthy lifestyle and the need for exercise, and make a good contribution to the school community. The development of teamwork and other social skills, together with pupils' improving progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills, prepares pupils satisfactorily for their next stage of education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In all classes, there is a calm, orderly and positive atmosphere for learning. Staff have good relationships with the pupils. Teaching assistants provide good support enabling all pupils to

access activities. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in pairs or larger groups. This enhances learning as pupils share ideas. Introductions to all lessons ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In many lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers have high expectations. Consequently, pupils are motivated and focused well on their tasks. In lessons where the pace is slower, pupils learn less and, in some cases, activities are not providing appropriate challenge for all pupils. This is often evident in science when the same activity is given to the whole class, despite the pupils' different abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities have contributed much over the last year to the improvements in pupils' achievement and personal development. Provision for English and mathematics is well organised and the school has been successful in developing important skills from these areas in other subjects. The science curriculum has been reorganised and now has a much higher profile. School excites the pupils. 'It's fun' is a regular response from pupils when asked why they enjoy Whitgreave. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils get a termly 'entitlement' of activities, which include a visit out of school to a place of interest and a live performance. Equally, there is a multi-cultural dimension to this entitlement, for example a visit to the Sikh temple or a focus on Black history week. Older pupils enjoy Spanish lessons and their visits to the local secondary school for yoga and exercise to music. However, some activities are too long for the youngest pupils. The school acknowledges the need to reorganise aspects of the Year 3 curriculum and this will be ready for next term.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support are a strength of the school. The school is a harmonious, friendly place with a caring culture shared by all. Pupils feel that they are very well cared for as individuals. Strong links with outside agencies and organisations ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are met effectively. Parents are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school. Rigorous vetting procedures, risk assessments, and good health and safety procedures are used effectively to ensure that pupils are safe in school and on school trips. Not all individual learning targets are accessible and understood by all pupils. As a result, academic guidance does not always contribute effectively to the learning of all pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly with supportive comments that identify whether the initial aim of the lesson has been met. Teachers' marking does not provide sufficient information to help pupils move on to the next stages of their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been successful in moving the school forward. She has centred her continual drive for improvement on improving pupils' achievement and ensuring good personal care and support for all pupils. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils have improved self-esteem and think the 'school is special'. Satisfactory leadership and management are provided by members of the school leadership team and subject coordinators. They are still developing their roles and the impact they have on improving pupils' achievement and the quality of provision. Under the clear guidance of the headteacher, they have come a long way. School self-evaluation is

good. Appropriate development priorities have enabled standards and pupils' achievement to improve quickly and have been a major reason for the school's noticeable improvement since the last inspection. Governors have contributed well to recent school improvement. They are prepared to ask challenging questions, know the school well, and take great pride in recent improvements.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

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?	2
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Whitgreave Junior School, Wolverhampton WV10 9JP

Thank you for making our visit to your school such an enjoyable experience. We were pleased to be able to talk to so many of you about your work and other activities that you take pleasure in. You try hard to do your best and behave well. Your school has improved a lot over the last year. This is because you have such a good headteacher. She has worked hard with all of the other staff to make sure that you all make the progress that you are capable of and enjoy coming to school.

We enjoyed visiting your lessons and looking at your books. Standards in English and mathematics have improved recently, but they could be higher in science. We have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to make sure that you do as well in science as in the other subjects. Many of the lessons that you receive are good. These help you make faster progress with your learning. Occasionally, lessons are sometimes too slow and some of you are not challenged enough with your work. We have asked the school to make sure that all lessons are good.

The teachers give you targets and write comments in your books to let you know how well you have done in lessons. Many of you spoke to us very sensibly about your targets and the levels you were working at in English and mathematics. However, not everyone understands their targets so we have asked the school to think about how they can improve this and also give you some comments in your books that help you improve your work even more.

You can help too by continuing to work hard, coming to school regularly, and doing your very best. We hope that all of your Christmas celebrations went well. Keep doing things the 'Whitgreave Way.'

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead inspector

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