

# Whitefield Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109576
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	310029
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Frith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lynda Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brendan Aspell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stockholm Way Luton Bedfordshire LU3 3SS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 596108
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 494883

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average size junior school situated in an area of high social deprivation. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is high. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is also high. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. Pupils enter school with well below average standards and frequently they are exceptionally low as were the starting points of pupils in the current Year 6. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds with approximately half from minority ethnic groups. An above average percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language a few of which are at the early stages of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school is correct in its view that it provides a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher has brought a sense of urgency to improving teaching and learning, and to raising standards. Recent developments and satisfactory improvement since the last inspection show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Parents are generally supportive of the school and how staff help their children. One parent wrote, 'The school cannot be faulted for its care and support'.

Pupils now achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. There has been some underachievement in the past but recent improvements in teaching and learning, and good use of the school's tracking system to identify those falling behind, have ensured that this has been eradicated. Pupils who find learning more difficult are supported well through additional programmes of work that help to accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There are positive features to the teaching throughout the school, but it is satisfactory overall. Some of the work lacks sufficient challenge because teachers do not always explain clearly what they want pupils to learn. Nevertheless, the recent progress of pupils in Year 6 is significantly improved because much of the teaching here is good. Consequently, although their standards in English, mathematics and science remain well below average, this represents satisfactory progress overall for their time in school. Senior staff are aware of the need to check the teaching more rigorously and provide guidance to teachers in order to improve the quality to good or better. Good support and guidance meets well the pupils' complex needs. This is essential in helping them to make the progress that they do. Pastoral care and academic guidance are good, so pupils feel safe in school and know what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Many enjoy what they do at school, are interested in lessons and behave well. However, in some lessons, the teaching does not fully engage the pupils' interest and a few misbehave. Consequently, their progress slows. On such occasions, pupils rely quite heavily on staff to remind them to behave well and concentrate on their learning. The satisfactory curriculum is helping to improve pupils' progress but does not yet ensure that pupils are fully involved in their learning. The personal, social and health education programme provides pupils with a satisfactory understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and ensure that the school provides sound value for money. Expectations of the role of subject leaders and governors have recently changed and this has highlighted the need for their monitoring roles to be improved in order for them to have a clearer focus on raising standards.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that pupils know what they are to learn and are challenged and engaged consistently.
- Improve teaching by checking the quality rigorously and providing guidance to teachers as to how to improve.
- Implement strategies to enable pupils to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- Develop the expertise of subject leaders so they become more accountable for raising standards.

A small proportion of 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 of all abilities, including those who need additional support with their learning, achieve satisfactorily. In 2007, the Year 6 national test results showed exceptionally low standards in English, mathematics and science and reflected underachievement for these pupils across Key Stage 2. However, because of recent improvements in teaching and learning, pupils' progress is now gradually improving, particularly in mathematics and science. The impact of this improvement is seen in the satisfactory progress that pupils make in lessons, and through the school's tracking data. The recent rapid progress of pupils in the current Year 6 has resulted in them now working at levels well below those expected for their age rather than the exceptionally low standards they were attaining on entry. The school was close to meeting its targets in 2007 and is on course to meet more challenging targets this year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and often good in lessons and assemblies when pupils are fully engaged. However, a few pupils continue to misbehave in the playground and in some lessons. Pupils know that bullying and racist behaviour are unacceptable and, although these have not been completely eradicated, they know that any incidents will be dealt with firmly and fairly. Attendance is much improved this year and is now average. Pupils have a sound understanding of what is needed for a healthy and safe lifestyle and the staff are helping them to make sensible choices. Pupils willingly take on roles such as school councillors and play leaders, but there are too few opportunities for them to develop further as responsible members of the school and wider communities. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and they make sound progress in acquiring the basic skills they need for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is often good and sometimes outstanding teaching, but it is satisfactory overall. This is because teaching and learning are inconsistent across the school and this leads to uneven progress. Planning is generally good and ensures that different groups of pupils are provided with work at a suitable level. Teachers' good classroom management is based on positive and caring working relationships. This enables most teachers to deal skilfully with the potentially disruptive behaviour of a small but significant minority of pupils. Whilst there is good teamwork and effective support from teaching assistants during group work and individual tasks, their skills are often underused during the teachers' introductions and discussions. In the most effective lessons, staff help pupils to judge how successful they have been and provide helpful feedback when marking their work. They also encourage pupils to share their ideas and answers with each other so they are all involved rather than waiting for someone else to answer a question. In weaker lessons, the teacher focuses on what pupils will do rather than what they

are expected to learn. Pupils respond by becoming passive learners. There are too few opportunities for them to share ideas, comment on their work and become actively involved in their own learning in order to develop their independence.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has made the development of literacy and numeracy skills a key priority. A strong emphasis on key skills is now beginning to promote better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Suitable catch-up programmes are organised for those who are falling behind as well as specialist teaching for more capable pupils. Improved links between subjects and exciting events such as themed weeks are not yet explored fully in order to make the curriculum and pupils' learning more stimulating. French is now taught in all classes, although it is still in its early stages of development. An effective programme of personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Visits, including residential experiences and other additional activities such as clubs and drama workshops extend pupils' learning as well as promoting their confidence and self-esteem.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Adults show a high level of commitment to the well-being of pupils, and parents acknowledge the positive effect this has on their children. The pastoral care of pupils is particularly good. Staff work well with a wide range of outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being. Help for those pupils who find learning difficult is good. There are now good systems for tracking pupils' progress, which enable staff to identify weaknesses more quickly and provide additional effective support. All pupils have targets in English and mathematics and these are already having a positive impact on improving pupils' progress. Teachers' marking usually offers good guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Good procedures for monitoring attendance and the introduction of effective procedures for following up absences have helped to improve attendance. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher gives purposeful direction to school improvement. Suitable priorities have been highlighted and appropriate strategies introduced so that the school is on a clear path of improvement. Key areas of strength and weakness are identified through the satisfactory self-evaluation of the school's work. Governors understand what needs to be improved and what staff do well. However, weaknesses in their monitoring mean that they sometimes have insufficient information with which to hold the school thoroughly to account. Recent changes to the management of the school have given greater responsibility to individual subject leaders. However, they have not yet had time to become fully effective in their roles, particularly regarding checking and raising standards. Nevertheless, a good start has been made in the way the leaders of English, mathematics and science are managing their subjects and identifying areas for improvement.

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## 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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

16 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitefield Junior School, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 3SS

You may remember that some inspectors recently visited your school to talk with you about what you do and what you learn. We enjoyed our visit, and would like to thank you for making us feel welcome. We think that the school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. If you read on you will see some of the things we found out.

- Your work is getting better and you are making satisfactory progress, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Most of you behave well but a few of you misbehave and call out in lessons. You could help by waiting until the teacher asks you to answer or by quietly telling the answer to the person next to you.
- We were pleased to see that more of you come to school regularly and on time and attendance is now average. Well done! Try to keep this up so you do not miss any valuable lessons.
- You understand how to keep safe and healthy and enjoy playing outside.
- Teaching is satisfactory and those of you who sometimes find it difficult to learn are helped a lot.
- You feel safe in school because staff look after you well. We were pleased to hear that you talk to a friend or member of staff if you have problems. You understand that bullying is wrong.

Mr Aspell has made some improvements since joining the school. He has agreed that staff and governors will try hard to improve the school and we hope you will help them. They will help you to improve your standards in English, mathematics and science so please work as hard as you can. Staff will also improve the way they teach so that you all make good progress, and take responsibility for your own behaviour and learning. Teachers who have responsibility for subjects are also going to improve how they lead and manage these subjects so you all do as well as you can.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector