

Whipton Barton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113093
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311103
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Ryder
Headteacher	Sandra Leggett
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Hill Lane Exeter EX1 3JP
Telephone number	01392 466072
Fax number	01392 462846

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Inspection number	311103

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average junior school draws its pupils from the north-eastern suburbs of Exeter. The school shares an extensive site with its partner infant school and a children's centre. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The school experiences high levels of pupil mobility, although this varies considerably from year to year. Some pupils are admitted following permanent exclusion from other schools. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, currently more than half the school, is considerably above the national average. Of these, 17 have statements of special educational need, a significantly higher proportion than in most schools. Many of these have profound and complex physical and learning needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good, with outstanding practice in the care and support for pupils. This is a school that has shown steady improvement under an effective and committed senior leadership team. The school's greatest strength is its commitment to inclusion and some pupils come here because of the school's reputation for dealing effectively with vulnerable pupils. Here, every child does indeed matter and staff go out of their way to make sure all pupils are included in classroom and other activities.

Most pupils enter the school with significant deficits in their learning and a great deal of ground to make up. They achieve well as a result of good teaching. Careful planning of work, effective management of pupils' behaviour and effective deployment of support staff enable most pupils to make good progress. For many pupils, progress is evident not in academic terms alone, but also in the tremendous boost that the school gives to their self-esteem and personal development. Although overall standards in Year 6 are below average, this still represents good progress, given pupils' low starting points. Standards are improving. In the 2007 tests they were broadly average in mathematics and not far off the national average in English, although they were further below average in science. The school has now taken action to ensure that the skills developed in teaching literacy and numeracy are applied to science, with a view to raising standards. In addition, the school has identified, through tracking pupils' progress, that pupils were making slower progress in some year groups and classes. Consequently it has redeployed staff and increased monitoring to ensure that weaknesses are rectified promptly.

Good leadership ensures that the school runs very smoothly and has good capacity to make further improvement. The school's evaluation of its performance is very accurate. Governance is good as governors provide both challenge and support, ensuring that the pace of change is sustained. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school. As one typical parent said, 'The school is very approachable. The care is excellent.' While a small number feel that the school does not respond sufficiently to their concerns over bullying, pupils themselves said that the school handles any disputes between pupils very well.

The curriculum is good, with strengths in the provision for personal, social and health education, the well judged matching of work to pupils' needs and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Care, guidance and support are exemplary, with pastoral aspects being outstanding. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, although they have limited awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, attitudes and behaviour are now good and pupils have a good awareness of the need to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science through more rigorous teaching.
- Ensure that pupils have better opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures that make up modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are well below average, and were exceptionally low for the current Year 6 pupils. In addition, the school attracts a significant number of pupils

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils have considerable ground to make up in literacy and numeracy. In most years recently, standards in Year 6 have been below average in English, mathematics and science, but there has been an improving trend, with the school exceeding its targets in English and mathematics in the 2007 tests. This represented good achievement, given the complex needs of many pupils. Overall performance in 2007 was depressed by lower standards in science. The school has responded promptly, so that raising standards in science is a current priority. At present, standards in Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science; even so, most pupils are making good progress from the extremely low starting points of this year group. The school is aware that there have been some variations in achievement between classes and year groups in the recent past. Effective tracking systems ensure that school leaders are well placed to identify pupils and classes likely to fall behind.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's commitment to a strongly inclusive ethos is evident in pupils' good social, moral and spiritual development. Pupils feel secure. They are confident, friendly and co-operate well together. They are tolerant and accepting of the needs of others. They feel that teachers will help them when they have difficulties. Pupils much enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in improved, broadly average attendance. Behaviour is good and most pupils are attentive in lessons. They conduct themselves safely and show respect for the vulnerability of pupils with restricted mobility. Pupils feel that, while occasional confrontations with other pupils do arise, the school manages their safety well. Several indicated that the pupil mediators make a valuable contribution to defusing incidents. Pupils make a strong positive contribution to the school community through the school council; they contribute to the wider community through activities such as singing to the elderly. Pupils develop well the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being, through fund-raising, running the tuck shop and initiating school clubs. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and the importance of diet and exercise. While pupils acquire some knowledge of other cultures through the curriculum, they have limited understanding of the diversity of cultures which characterise contemporary Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is generally good, although there are some inconsistencies between classes. A key strength is the skill with which teachers manage pupils' behaviour. Relationships are good, creating a positive climate for learning. As a result, most pupils are fully engaged in lessons, so that time is used productively. Effective use of assessment information ensures that planning, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, provides activities well matched to pupils' needs. Skilful questioning identifies whether pupils understand what they have been taught, while effective strategies such as 'talking partners' help pupils to articulate and consolidate their understanding. There is some effective marking of pupils' work which indicates how they can improve it. Teaching assistants have a high level of expertise and support pupils extremely well, ensuring their involvement and understanding. While most lessons have a brisk pace and provide good challenge, in a small number the pace suffers because of overly long introductions. As a result pupils learn less well and the more able are not given enough challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and effectively enriched by visits and through the excellent extra-curricular programme. Extra-curricular activities are well supported and make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. The impact of the good personal, social and health curriculum is evident in pupils' positive attitudes. Residential trips in Year 4 and Year 6 enrich pupils' experience of geography, history and environmental science successfully promote their independence. The school has fine-tuned the curriculum in literacy and numeracy to meet the diverse learning needs of the many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Accurate identification of need, rigorous planning and skilled teaching are enabling these pupils to make good progress. Science is a current priority for similar development. While some effective cross-curricular links are established, for example, between mathematics and science, there is scope for developing literacy skills further in other areas of the curriculum. The physical education curriculum has been extended to support the healthy lifestyles agenda. French is taught across the school. Gifted and talented pupils, though not numerous, are supported well through lesson planning, access to outside events and through encouragement to initiate activities in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support is outstanding. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare rigorously. Playground supervision is highly effective. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to support them. Because of the high proportion of vulnerable pupils, the school has very effective links with external agencies. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Together with the skilled teaching assistants, this ensures excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems for identifying these pupils have been enhanced and the impact of support is closely monitored. Academic guidance is good. Across the school, pupils' progress is monitored effectively. Pupils are gaining confidence in evaluating the quality of their work. They have individual improvement targets in literacy, numeracy and personal development and, in general, have a secure knowledge of these. The marking of some teachers is closely linked to these targets and this promotes progress well. Variations in the rigour of marking mean that the impact of targets is sometimes inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Underpinning the many strengths of the school is the clear guidance, vision and drive of the headteacher, ably supported by a strong senior leadership team. All share a commitment to improving the quality of the school's work. Less experienced senior and middle managers are at different stages of developing their roles so that their impact on the quality of provision is less consistent. They are supported well through professional development opportunities and by experienced colleagues. School self-evaluation is good. Rigorous checks on what is working well and what needs to be improved help the school to plan the next steps. Occasionally, the monitoring of teaching does not identify areas for improvement incisively enough. Data is analysed closely to track the progress of pupils. Staff have a high level of accountability for the standards and achievement of their pupils. Governance is good. Governors are well informed

and have a clear view of the school's priorities. They provide both effective challenge and support for school leaders.

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
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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?	2
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	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whipton Barton Junior School, Exeter EX1 3JP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your enthusiasm for your school came across strongly. You talk about school very positively and really appreciate what the staff do for you. We were particularly impressed by the way you care for each other and try to include everyone, whatever their needs. We felt that Whipton Barton is a good school.

The main things that we found are;

- You behave well in lessons and generally work hard.
- Most teaching is good and you make good progress. Most teachers give you clear guidance about how you can improve your work in literacy and numeracy.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for really well. It is particularly good at including everyone in activities, whatever their needs.
- Standards are rising in English and mathematics.
- Teachers try to make your lessons interesting and you support the clubs well.
- The school runs very smoothly and the school leaders know exactly what they have to do to make things even better.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that it is even more effective.

- Make sure that standards improve in science by planning really challenging lessons which help you to learn more quickly.
- Make sure that you have the opportunity to learn more about the lives and experiences of people from different cultures and of other nationalities.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead inspector

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whipton Barton Junior School, Exeter EX1 3JP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your enthusiasm for your school came across strongly. You talk about school very positively and really appreciate what the staff do for you. We were particularly impressed by the way you care for each other and try to include everyone, whatever their needs. We felt that Whipton Barton is a good school.

The main things that we found are;

- You behave well in lessons and generally work hard.
- Most teaching is good and you make good progress. Most teachers give you clear guidance about how you can improve your work in literacy and numeracy.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for really well. It is particularly good at including everyone in activities, whatever their needs.
- Standards are rising in English and mathematics.
- Teachers try to make your lessons interesting and you support the clubs well.
- The school runs very smoothly and the school leaders know exactly what they have to do to make things even better.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that it is even more effective.

- Make sure that standards improve in science by planning really challenging lessons which help you to learn more quickly.
- Make sure that you have the opportunity to learn more about the lives and experiences of people from different cultures and of other nationalities.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector