

Whitley Lodge First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108600
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	324800
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	278
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Lutman
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodburn Drive Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 3HW
Telephone number	0191 200 8781
Fax number	0191 200 1430

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than other First schools and is situated in an area which is more socially advantaged than average. Very few pupils claim a free school meal. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion of pupils who have a statement of their special educational need is high. This is due in the most part to the school now providing a base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Good leadership and management have created a successful learning community with well above average standards, good achievement and a good capacity to improve further. Parents are pleased with what the school offers their children.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and levels of attendance are high. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and with each other, and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. As a result, pupils develop very good attitudes to learning and behaviour is exemplary. They know how to keep safe and are fully aware of the many benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables and taking regular exercise. They enthusiastically take part in the wide variety of sporting activities offered to them. The pupils socialise together exceptionally well and show concern for the welfare of each other. They make many positive contributions to the school and local community. Well above average basic skills, together with a very well developed understanding of individual and collective responsibility, means pupils are prepared extremely well for the future.

As a result of good teaching and a curriculum which is designed to make learning interesting and enjoyable pupils make good progress overall. However, this varies between subjects. Many pupils make good progress in reading and reach well above average standards. Although standards in mathematics are above average progress is inconsistent in Years 3 and 4. An improved selection of books to interest boys together with a focus on providing writing opportunities which capture their imagination has successfully closed the gap between the standards attained by boys and girls. Teachers create a positive climate for learning. They know pupils well and relationships are strong. Teachers' assessment of pupils work sometimes lacks accuracy and this leads at times to a lack of challenge in lessons. This lack of challenge, along with too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems and investigate for themselves are key reasons why progress is at times inconsistent, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils are well cared for. Procedures to keep them safe at school meet national guidelines. Academic guidance is improving due to the priority being given to involve pupils in the assessment of their own work, but this is still at an early stage of development. The school is fully inclusive and emphasises equality of access for all pupils. Strong links with the special school that shares the school site provide a range of opportunities for pupils from both schools and helps pupils at Whitley Lodge to develop good understanding of the needs of those who have barriers to overcome in their learning. The headteacher and governors set a clear direction for further improvement. However, a lack of rigour in checking the impact on pupils' progress from what the school provides means they currently have an overgenerous view of the school's overall effectiveness. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school operates as a harmonious community and local links are strong, wider links to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles are not yet fully developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On arrival children's skills are above what is typical for their age. Excellent interaction with parents ensures that staff are fully aware of individual needs, talents and abilities. This helps the children settle quickly, happily and confidently. As a consequence, they also gain early independence. Parents especially appreciate the high quality of care for their children. 'My son

cannot get into the nursery quickly enough. This is down to the kind, caring nature of staff and the stimulating activities which they plan,' sums up their views. Children enjoy their work and make good progress in their speaking, listening and early writing. They make excellent progress building upon their personal skills because of the warm supportive relationships they have with adults and with each other. As a result, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the levels reached are well above those typical for their age.

Vibrant, stimulating areas, especially in the Nursery, fire imagination, enable children's talents to flourish and provide well for their learning and development. Thoughtfully prepared activities make certain no one is left out. There is a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. Systematic observation and accurate assessment enables learning activity to be tailored to meet needs. Children learn how to think for themselves, explore problems and make decisions. Role play enriches learning well, for example, the travel agency gives an insight into the wider world and the skill of negotiation. Children relish the chance to learn outdoors although the activities provided currently do not provide sufficient challenge in all areas of learning. Children thrive on the everyday celebration of their achievements. They are learning the benefits of adopting healthy and safe habits, for example, washing their hands after building in sand or taking a healthy drink after exercise. This well led and managed provision promotes children's welfare exceptionally well. Children feel safe, secure and know that their contributions are valued.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the level of challenge and range of opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring to accurately measure the impact of provision and improve the accuracy of assessment.
- Improve the schools contribution to community cohesion and increase pupils' awareness and understanding of people in other areas which are different from themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. From starting school with skill levels that are well above those typical for their age they make good progress and leave with well above average standards. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are consistently well above average as is reflected in the results of national assessments which have been very high since the last inspection. However, standards in mathematics have not always been as high as other subjects. Standards at the end of Year 4 remain well above average overall especially in reading and writing. Overall standards in mathematics are above average but because of inconsistent progress, fewer pupils attain above average standards than in reading and writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of careful identification of their needs and the good support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the high value the school places upon them. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school, especially when they are actively engaged in their learning, and they behave exceptionally well both in and out of lessons. Levels of attendance are well above average. Pupils are polite, helpful and supportive

of one another as seen in the care they show for pupils from the neighbouring special school who learn alongside them. All pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social and cultural development is good but their multi-cultural awareness is only satisfactory as they have insufficient knowledge of other faiths and cultures and of the multi-ethnic nature of modern Britain. A range of external accreditation and awards shows the outstanding quality of pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through the elected school council and their work as monitors. They are also strongly involved in the wider community with contributions to local competitions and developments in the environment which develop their enterprise skills. These and the many other skills they acquire mean that pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education. Their achievement of well above average standards in basic skills means their preparation for their future economic well-being is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships throughout the school create a positive climate for learning. Teachers ensure that tasks are purposeful and interesting and require pupils to co-operate with one another. A variety of strategies are used effectively to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in class discussions. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and this ensures that time in lessons is generally used well. However, occasionally learning slows because the information gained from assessing pupils work is not always accurate. As a result, the challenge of subsequent work does not build sufficiently quickly and pupils can spend too much time consolidating previously acquired knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum successfully meets the needs of pupils, with good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Themes which link subjects together provide pupils with many varied opportunities to practise and strengthen their literacy and information and communication technology skills. A good range of first-hand experiences makes learning more interesting and meaningful for pupils. For example, valuable active learning experiences which fuel imagination and interest are gained when visiting the nearby countryside park or talking to lifeguards. However, opportunities are missed to promote thinking and problem solving skills to boost pupils' achievement. This is especially the case in mathematics where a heavy reliance on pre-printed worksheets limits pupils learning. There is very good provision for personal development which results in confident pupils eager to learn. A wide variety of activities and sports further enrich the curriculum during or after the school day, for example, learning to play a musical instrument and playing team games.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The very good pastoral care builds a strong level of trust between the pupils and staff. Parents appreciate the good quality of care the school provides for pupils on a day-to-day basis. This reflects the positive caring school ethos. Procedures to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of pupils are in place and meet current guidelines.

Pupils are well supported in their transfer to their next stage of education. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties receive high quality support which enables them to access fully all learning opportunities and make good progress. Challenging learning targets are set for individual pupils, however, the practices of involving pupils in the setting of these targets or in self-assessment of their progress are not consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school has been thorough in implementing improvements since the last inspection and as a result has maintained well above average standards. Self-evaluation procedures help the school to identify the appropriate areas for further development. Pupils' progress is regularly checked and challenging targets are set. However, a lack of rigour in checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments or the impact of provision results in an overgenerous view of how well pupils are doing. All pupils are treated equally. Links with external agencies are good and support pupils' learning and well-being effectively. Resources are good and used well to aid learning. Governors are well informed and give up their time willingly to provide good support and challenge to the school.

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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?	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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitley Lodge First School, North Tyneside, NE26 3HW

Thank you for the help you gave to me and the other members of the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your classrooms, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. You were friendly and courteous and we were impressed by your attitudes to your work and high levels of attendance.

We found many good things about your school during our visit. The school provides you with a good quality of education which helps you to reach above average standards. The school cares for you well and your personal development is excellent. You told us that you feel safe and we could see how well you care for one another. We know you understand the importance of being fit and healthy. Your school is a happy place in which to learn and it was good to see how well you get involved in the local community. We have now asked the school to help you to learn more about people who live in Great Britain but who come from different backgrounds and cultures than yourselves.

It was good to see how well the boys are now doing with their writing and you told us that you enjoy the topics which help you to learn about things in a variety of different ways. We did find however that you do not always have enough opportunities to investigate or solve problems for yourselves. This was especially the case in mathematics where the number of times you complete work on printed sheets is slowing the progress which you make.

We also asked the school to carefully check whether what they are providing for you is helping you to improve and that they have an accurate understanding of the levels at which you are working.

You can do your bit to further improve the school by continuing working hard as you do now.

We wish you all the best of luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Linda Buller

Lead inspector