

Whetstone Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104198
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	354532
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Thorley
Headteacher	Kate Hancox
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 February 2007
School address	Beaufort Way Aldridge Walsall WS9 0HJ
Telephone number	01922 743498
Fax number	01922 745240
Email address	postbox@whetstone.walsall.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 July 2010
Inspection number	354532

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed and nine teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' progress, the school development plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, governing body minutes and a range of other documentation. Ninety-five responses to the parental questionnaire were received.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by higher attaining pupils
- the impact of current improvement work
- the use of assessment in helping pupils know how to improve their work
- the quality and impact of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Most pupils are White British, with a small number of Asian or Asian British heritages. Although some pupils speak English as an additional language, very few are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There is one intake into the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery at the beginning of the autumn term. Most children in the Reception class have attended the Nursery.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for five terms.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils are a delight! They like school, are keen to learn, show respect for adults and their classmates and are interesting to talk to. After a dip in 2009, pupils' attainments are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics, as they had been over a number of years. Pupils make good progress, irrespective of their level of attainment, any special educational needs and/or disabilities or their gender. Improvement work has ensured that progress is increasingly even in all year groups, from the Nursery class onwards. Excellent care is taken of each and every individual with successes being celebrated and swift action being taken to support those with personal or educational difficulties. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure in school and know what they should do to maintain this, both in school and beyond.

Pupils are interested, enthusiastic learners. This is because teachers choose motivating activities to support learning in lessons. These are supported by an extensive range of enrichment activities including a wide range of visitors to the school and educational visits. Teachers develop strong relationships with the pupils and, as a result, pupils try hard and it is rare for adults to have to remind them of expectations of behaviour in lessons. Pupils' behaviour outside class is exemplary. In this and a range of other day-to-day ways, pupils make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school and they play a good part in contributing to the life of the local area. They are not yet, however, as involved in helping the school to improve as they could be. The school has clear channels for parents and carers to discuss concerns and put forward suggestions but, like their children, parents are not yet as fully involved in school self-evaluation and development as they might be.

The school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher has been very successful in forming a team of staff and governors who share a determination to ensure that pupils receive as good an education as possible. School self-evaluation has accurately pinpointed areas that needed improvement. Actions taken have been successful, for example in significantly improving rates of progress in writing. Work has been done to improve the impact of assessment in lessons. Teachers are now aware of the attainment of each individual and what needs to be done to help them improve. Teachers use assessment to plan lessons that meet pupils' overall needs, but they are not always sufficiently precise in communicating to pupils what they expect of them by the end of a lesson. This means that pupils are not able to focus their efforts as well as they could and are not always sure if they have been successful. Pupils report they get helpful oral feedback from teachers but

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

that they do not find the marking of their work as consistently useful. In a minority of lessons, teachers plan to cover too much and, consequently, talk for too long, reducing the time pupils have to practise and develop their skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of the use of assessment by ensuring that:
 - pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn in each lesson
 - pupils have sufficient information to enable them to judge if they have met expectations by the end of the lesson
 - marking is specific in showing pupils where they have succeeded and where they could improve their work
 - the objectives for lessons are tightly focused, so that time at the beginning of lessons is used consistently well.
- Increase the involvement of parents and carers and pupils in helping the school to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Recent changes mean that progress in English and mathematics is now much more consistent than in the past and in almost all areas is good. Higher attaining pupils are successfully helped to make good progress. Pupils also demonstrate above average skills in physical education, and art displays around the school are of good quality. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is very evident. In a mathematics lesson, for example, they became increasingly animated as they saw how they could use their knowledge of co-ordinates to solve a problem they had thought too difficult. They are proud of their achievements, wanting to show visitors what they have accomplished, from the writing in their English books to their home-grown radishes! Pupils are also proud of their school and are keen that it should be seen in a good light.

Not only do they behave well, but they can be seen reminding each other of what they should be doing. This illustrates their strong social and moral development. The empathy they show for others and the delight they take in learning new things demonstrate very good spiritual development. Pupils' cultural development is good. The school tries hard, with increasing success, to give them experiences that extend their understanding of cultures beyond their own. Pupils report there is no bullying in school and that any unkindness is rapidly and effectively sorted out, mainly by pupils themselves but, on the rare occasions it is needed, by school staff. Pupils have strong understanding of how to remain healthy and are active in pursuing this, both personally and by encouraging others to do so. The school council, for example, has set up a healthy tuck shop and is very strict about what may be sold there. High levels of attendance and good basic skills, combined with an ability to be articulate, to work together and to be resilient when work presents difficulties, mean pupils' preparation for their future lives is strong.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Some important aspects of teaching have been successfully developed and are now promoting good learning. Teachers plan lessons in sequences that give pupils an understanding of how their work will develop over time. They ensure pupils are actively engaged, effectively promoting concentration. Partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants are productive, ensuring that pupils have good amounts of good quality adult attention. Teachers use the environment well to provide pupils with helpful prompts that they put to good use. The school has rightly focused on developing teachers' skills in using assessment. This has been effective in ensuring that they are aware of the attainment and progress of each pupil and the next steps required to help them. Nevertheless there is still some work to do, particularly in the way that pupils are enabled to assess their own work and see how it could be improved.

The curriculum effectively supports pupils' progress in a range of subjects, including a well-judged emphasis on basic skills. It is very successful in promoting pupils' liking of school and their personal development. The curriculum in English is effective in allowing pupils to practise what they have learned across subjects. As yet, this has not yet been fully implemented in mathematics although the school plans to do so.

Strong care and guidance mean that all pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds or difficulties, are very effectively supported and are very well placed to make good progress. The school has an individualised approach which means that each pupil is

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

valued and nurtured. The school takes advantage of very good links with other agencies to very promptly support pupils where the need arises. Parents value highly the way the way their children are kept safe and helped to become increasingly healthy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff and the governors share the vision of the headteacher to improve provision in order to ensure pupils are helped to develop academically and personally. The school’s work is checked regularly and actions taken to improve, as well as their impact, are well documented. Data are well managed so teachers are aware of the attainment of their pupils and held to account for their progress, ensuring high aspirations for all. This high aspiration for each individual also successfully supports promotion of equality of opportunity.

Governors are active in ensuring statutory requirements are met and are increasingly adept at holding the school to account. They play a particularly important role in ensuring safeguarding is given the highest priority and all requirements are very regularly checked so not even the smallest risk is ignored. Good outcomes and resource management enable the school to provide good value for money. The school makes every effort to build productive links with parents, who are welcomed into the school. Although open to receiving the comments and opinions of parents, it has not made parents fully aware that this is a key aspect of their role. So parents have not been able to use this as a means of contributing to school improvement. In the last two years, the school has reached out to its local community, for example developing links with a local special school, thus enhancing the experience of the pupils in both schools. Links with the local secondary school have been positively promoted through the inclusion of a member of staff from this school on the governing body. Actions such as these, and the work to develop pupils’ understanding of the cultural heritages of their classmates, are helping provision in community cohesion develop well and are supporting the school’s commitment to tackling discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	2
---	----------

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

A well-planned, well-balanced curriculum means that the children progress well and develop independence and a love of learning. By the end of Reception, they have skills that are above those expected in all areas of learning. Children are very interested in what they are doing and so they are motivated to learn. They had, for example, shown an interest in space and this became the topic for current work. As a result, they have impressive knowledge of the planets in our Universe! Activities provide children with good opportunities to learn through working directly with adults and to further their own interests. They are encouraged to think for themselves. A small group were, for example, very intent on playing a game they had made up and organised for themselves. This involved writing numbers and players’ names as well as taking turns. The provision, in particular the liaison between Nursery and Reception staff and the use of the outdoor area, has been greatly improved, demonstrating the success of its leadership. The school is, however, correct in identifying the need to continue the development of both of these initiatives.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are supportive of most aspects of the school. They are

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

particularly pleased that their children like school and that it keeps them safe. Inspectors agree with these opinions. Inspectors looked closely at the concerns raised by some parents and carers about behaviour. They saw exemplary behaviour on the part of the vast majority and this was corroborated by the pupils. Some parents feel that their concerns and suggestions are not acted upon. School records show that considerable time and effort are put into working with parents who raise concerns. The school has sought the views of parents and carers in questionnaires, but acknowledges that they could involve parents and carers more in school self-evaluation and development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whetstone Field Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	46	46	48	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	48	48	51	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	29	31	59	62	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	34	58	61	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	39	50	53	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	29	56	59	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	26	63	66	5	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	34	53	56	5	5	4	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	29	60	63	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	25	50	53	8	8	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	23	51	54	12	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	22	23	55	58	8	8	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	39	41	49	52	3	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Whetstone Field Primary School, Walsall, WS9 0HJ

We really enjoyed our two days at your school and would like to thank you for your help and friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that we judge yours to be a good school.

Among the things we liked were:

- the good progress you make in reading, writing and mathematics
- you get on so well together and have an exceptional understanding of how to stay safe and healthy
- the way you concentrate in class and do your best with your work
- teachers make your work interesting
- the care adults take to make you feel safe and happy
- staff and governors are working together to make your school an even better place.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do:

- make sure you know exactly what you are aiming to learn in each lesson so that you can judge by the end of the lesson whether you have been successful
- make sure marking is helpful in showing you where you could improve
- make sure you do not have to listen to the teacher for too long at the beginning of lessons
- involve you and your parents more in helping to improve your school. Through your school council, you can really help!

We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you are very lucky to be at a school where you are given so many opportunities to broaden your experiences.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions
Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**