

Whiteknights Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109839
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	356639
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bayes
Headteacher	Jenny Daniels
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 July 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited sixteen lessons, observed fifteen teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. They looked at school documentation including policies, pupils' progress data, attendance figures and the school's development planning. They also scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 189 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving the learning and progress for all pupils in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The use staff make of assessment information to support and challenge pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of leaders in checking, reviewing and taking actions to improve teaching and pupils' progress and tackle any underachievement in order to raise standards and secure good achievement.
- The extent to which the school has been successful in taking actions to tackle absenteeism.

Information about the school

Whiteknights is a larger-than-average primary school. Two thirds of the pupils come from White British families, with the remaining third coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Almost a quarter of the children speak English as an additional language and of these, half join with little or no English, with thirty-two different first languages recorded. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average and represents a range of needs. A greater-than-average proportion of pupils join and leave the school at times other than expected. The school has gained the Healthy School accreditation. Over the last two years there have been many changes to staff, including the appointments of both the deputy and assistant headteachers. In addition, five senior leaders have taken maternity leave during this period. The governing body currently has vacancies for a third of its members.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Since its previous inspection, it has successfully maintained the good level of pastoral care, guidance and support it provides, ensuring that pupils feel safe and well cared for and thrive in their personal development. Pupils benefit from good relationships with staff, their behaviour is good both in lessons and at play, and they show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. They talk with enthusiasm about their school and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle, as demonstrated by their keen take-up of clubs.

The school is now solidly focused on improving teaching and learning for the pupils after a period of staff changes and recent appointments. There is a strong shared commitment to raising attainment for all pupils. Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate awareness of the school's effectiveness and what it needs to do to bring about improvement. For example, the school has worked hard to raise achievement in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. As a result of their successful focus on the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics), attainment in English has risen to average. This success, combined with the effective action to raise attendance, shows the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. It is now focusing on tackling the weaknesses in communication, language and literacy earlier as children join in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where, for example they have too few opportunities to mark make and write.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, and attainment is broadly average at Year 6. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, it is good in an increasing number of lessons and classes throughout the school. This is because leaders have focused successfully on improving the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and, as a result, pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than in others. Consequently, pupils do not build consistently well on their learning as they move through the school. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but some do not make sufficiently accurate use of this information to set suitably challenging work for all pupils. This hinders the progress made by some pupils, particularly in mathematics. In addition, gaps in their basic numeracy skills and too few opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects hamper their progress. While day-to-day assessment, including marking, is effective in some classes, in others it is not used well enough. Not all pupils are made aware of the next small steps needed to improve their work, and this limits their ability to take responsibility

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for their learning.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure better achievement for all pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and making better use of assessment information in the planning process to ensure that lessons always challenge and engage pupils well
 - developing teachers' use of marking so pupils always understand exactly what to do to improve their work and know the next steps in their learning.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - securing pupils' basic number skills and developing their use in solving mental calculations and real-life mathematical problems
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to practice the skills they have learned in numeracy lessons in other subjects.
- Develop the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the number and quality of opportunities for children to practise their writing
 - ensuring all the activities on offer are closely matched to next steps in children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their academic learning, helped by their good attitudes towards school. However, while progress is sometimes good, this is not yet a consistent feature because planned learning is not always matched closely enough to the differing abilities of each group or individual to enable all pupils to achieve consistently well. In such cases, pupils' interest and progress dip. Where learning is good, pupils are motivated and engaged, talking eagerly about what they have learnt. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson the classroom buzzed with pupils' enthusiasm as they successfully identified the key number facts that would help in solving the exact age of their teacher. Working well collaboratively, they explained confidently their reasoning whilst readily tackling the problem as a result of skilful questioning and challenge.

Throughout the school, progress is securely satisfactory, with an increasing proportion of pupils achieving well. Pupils reach average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, but particularly low in

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communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress at this early point and so start in Year 1 weaker in this key aspect of their work. As a result of the effective focus in Years 1 and 2 on the teaching of these basic skills, attainment in reading and writing has been rising steadily over the last three years and, consequently, by the time pupils reach Year 2, it is broadly average. However, there remains too much inconsistency in the rate of progress across the year groups for progress as a whole to be any greater than satisfactory. The school is well aware that attainment in mathematics for all pupils still has to rise, and has already taken steps to hasten its improvement, but these have yet to make a full impact. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Those at the early stages of learning English make good progress in learning English and settle quickly as a result of the appropriately targeted support planned for them. Parents and carers commented positively that this has enabled their children to have the opportunity to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils achieve well in many aspects of their personal and social development. Behaviour is well managed, with most pupils saying that they enjoy school, feel cared for and know they can talk to someone if they have any problems. As a result, although a small minority of parents, carers and pupils have concerns, inspectors judge behaviour to be good. Pupils’ enjoyment of school life is evident in their eagerness to take on responsibilities. Pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development is good and, with many different ethnic heritages represented in the school population, their cultural awareness within the school is particularly strong. The regular attendance of most pupils and ability in general to work well together from an early age are key factors in pupils’ satisfactory development of basic skills and preparation for their future life and learning.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3

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

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between staff and pupils and the effective way behaviour is managed by all staff help to foster pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Information and communication technology is used well by both adults and pupils to add to pupils' learning experience and engagement. Some lessons are planned and organised well with interesting activities to engage the pupils and high expectations set by teachers. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to build on their basic number skills in a mathematics lesson as a result of the teacher's good modelling with her frog puppet. They produced high quality answers, discussing their ideas and recording them in pairs on whiteboards as the teacher used questioning effectively to challenge and extend. However, this approach is not always the case, with lessons where work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities and expectations are not high enough. In their marking, teachers do not refer consistently enough to the next steps in learning or to pupils' individual targets in order to show them how to improve their work.

The curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, enabling them to build satisfactory basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Following the successful promotion of basic literacy skills for the younger pupils, the school is in the process of targeting basic skills and mental calculations in mathematics. Opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical understanding and to allow them to use and apply their knowledge across subjects are less well established. Through its evolving tracking systems the school is increasingly holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress. The improvements are enabling staff to track pupils' progress more closely and identify particular learning needs more rapidly than before. As a result, the curriculum is increasingly tailored carefully to pupils' needs in lessons, in small-group work or on a one-to-one basis. However, while these strategies are quickening the progress of those pupils who need additional support in reading, they are not yet fully embedded or as effective in supporting pupils in mathematics. The curriculum is enriched well through a wide variety of visits and visitors as well as a good range of extra-curricular activities which help to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are well catered for because the school works closely with parents and outside agencies. One such area is pupils' attendance which, whilst average, has risen considerably over the last year. This is due to the success the school has had in working with pupils and parents and carers of those who find it difficult to attend regularly. Pupils who join the school at times other than expected make the same progress as their peers because the school accurately targets support where needed to ensure their achievement does not dip.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all members of the senior leadership team, who are equally ambitious for the school. There is a positive team spirit and a strong atmosphere of 'can do' amongst the whole staff. Good links with parents are helping the school to achieve its goals. As new leaders take up their role they become increasingly involved in analysing performance data to see how well the school is doing and to plan actions for improvement. Through its rigorous tracking systems, the school is also increasingly holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Subject leaders, some new to their role, play an appropriate part in checking how well their subject is doing, and planning for improvement. Those plans are beginning to be put into action, but there has not yet been enough time for them to fully take effect. The governing body is conscientious in fulfilling its statutory duties to ensure the safety of the children and agree policies. However, its role in driving forward school improvement is less well established.

At the time of the inspection, leaders at all levels, and staff, were seen to play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures were adequately met, with the safeguarding governor making appropriate checks on the school's procedures and systems. The school's promotion of equality and diversity is good because it takes effective steps to tackle discrimination to make sure that pupils from all backgrounds perform to a similar standard, whilst ensuring the most vulnerable pupils have the opportunities to achieve as well as their peers. Pupils are encouraged to play their part in the school and the local community, and their understanding and contribution are developing well in these areas. The school is also beginning to promote pupils' understanding of communities and cultures in national and global contexts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly average for their age, but well below the levels expected in communication, language and literacy. They grow in confidence and make satisfactory progress so that attainment is average in the different areas of learning, except communication, language and literacy, as they start in Year 1. The curriculum as a whole is adapted appropriately to engage the children in active learning both inside and outdoors. Adults are good at engaging children’s interest through effective questioning. For example, a group worked outside making treasure maps and using water and brushes to mark crosses where treasure was hidden. Good opportunities for children to share their ideas were provided through effective open-ended questioning so that children gained in their understanding of the world. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with an appropriate mixture of activities led by staff and those chosen by the children themselves. However, whilst assessment information is used effectively to record children’s progress, it is not yet used well enough in planning ahead to ensure they make good gains in their learning from day to day. Adults miss opportunities to extend children’s learning by tailoring activities more closely to meet their needs and interests. Similarly, planning lacks sufficient quality opportunities to enthuse and engage children as writers or extend and develop these skills sufficiently to enable them to achieve well.

Communication with parents and carers is good, with home–school books currently being developed to give them a better understanding of how they can help their children’s development through everyday activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and her team ensure children are provided with a safe environment in which to learn and grow. She has a clear understanding of the next steps to be taken to strengthen provision and ensure children achieve well in all aspects of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

The return of questionnaires from parents and carers was above average. The vast majority of these were positive and most of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. They commended the caring attitude of the school, its support for pupils and how well the school is led and managed. Typical comments about the school included, 'The school has a good atmosphere, my child enjoys it and is very happy', 'It is a well run school' and, 'The staff are friendly, caring and supportive.'

A very small minority of parents and carers reported concerns over how the school deals with disruptive behaviour and how the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. While there are occasional displays of challenging behaviour by pupils, these are effectively managed, with minimal impact on other learners. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that parental concerns were dealt with in a timely manner and the open-door policy is welcomed by parents and carers, some of whom commented positively on this aspect of the school's work in their questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whiteknights 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 189 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 398 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	55	80	42	2	1	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	110	58	74	39	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	71	38	106	56	9	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	37	101	53	11	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	84	44	96	51	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	78	41	93	49	10	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	43	96	51	8	4	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)	63	33	96	51	7	4	3	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	74	39	99	52	4	2	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	37	83	44	22	12	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	29	113	60	4	2	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	99	52	82	43	2	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	96	51	81	43	6	3	3	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



12 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whiteknights Primary School, Reading RG2 8EP

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you like school and we agree that you do best when your teachers plan many interesting things for you to do. You get on with one another well and behave well in lessons and around the school. We think your school gives you the right help so that you know how to keep healthy and safe.

The inspection team has found that your school is satisfactory. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs as it should and teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work. The leaders in the school know what needs to be done to make your school better. In order to help you to make faster progress, we have asked the staff at your school to do three things:

- Make sure your lessons are always challenging enough and interesting, have high expectations of what you can do and make better use of marking to help you understand how to improve.
- Help you to develop your basic number and mental mathematics skills and give you plenty of opportunities to use and practise them, particularly in the other subjects.
- Use assessment in the Reception classes to plan the next steps in children's learning, and provide opportunities for them to practise and use their writing skills.

You can help by coming to school regularly, continuing to respect others' values and always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall
Lead inspector

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