

Whirley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111153
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	356870
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Brocklehurst
Headteacher	Mr John Rowan
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
School address	Whirley Road Broken Cross, Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 3JL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons or part-lessons and these included the observation of nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and the 107 questionnaires returned by parents and carers was scrutinised.

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

- Inspectors explored whether pupils in Key Stage 2 are making enough progress in English and mathematics, especially the more able.
- They evaluated whether the school has effective arrangements to track the progress pupils make.
- The team examined the extent to which leaders and managers, at all levels, can demonstrate the school's capacity for securing sustained improvement.
- The inspection team considered the impact that the formal collaboration with other schools locally has on pupils' learning.

Information about the school

This primary school is smaller than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. A below-average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion which has a statement of special educational needs is well above average.

The school is part of a formal collaborative arrangement with six local primary schools and a secondary school. These schools do not share the same governing body or headteacher. The formal collaboration is overseen by a joint committee. The school holds Healthy Schools status and has achieved Activemark, Artsmark Silver Award and International Schools awards.

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

Whirley is a good school. It is an inclusive school where relationships are extremely strong. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers together with outstanding care, guidance and support, ensure that adults know pupils exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are confident there is always an adult they can turn to for help if they should need it. Pupils behave well, enjoy learning and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. All pupils take on responsibility willingly. They make an outstanding contribution to the school, and the immediate and wider community. Partnership arrangements are excellent. The formal collaboration with local schools helps to raise pupils' aspirations and the quality of their learning. Links and support from external agencies have a marked impact on those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have more complex needs. This results in notable improvements in their confidence and self-esteem.

Overall, pupils' progress is good. The rich curriculum adds depth and interest to pupils' learning. The outstanding range of activities beyond lessons is greatly enjoyed by pupils; the vast majority attends at least one activity each week. Teaching is good. A number of outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average overall. Although attainment in mathematics is rising, pupils' progress in the subject is not as fast as in English. In Key Stage 2, pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their mathematical skills in other subjects, and tasks are not always sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able.

Leaders and managers are effective. Amongst all staff there is a shared vision for the future. A cycle to monitor and evaluate the quality of education systematically and pupils' performance is well-established. It provides an accurate evaluation of the school's work. As a result, the correct priorities for improvement are identified and carefully pursued. Systems to track the progress made by pupils have been refined and are now robust. These revised arrangements enable the school to focus more precisely on, and tackle, any potential underachievement. The governing body is supportive and discharges its statutory responsibilities well, but is at an early stage of holding the school to account. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have mostly been successfully tackled. As a result, the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In Key Stage 2, increase the rate of progress made by pupils in mathematics by ensuring that:

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- -careful use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is precisely tailored to pupils' needs and abilities, especially the more able
 - pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their mathematical skills in a range of contexts
 - marking always indicates to pupils how to improve their work
 - pupils' learning targets are clear, closely matched to their abilities and inform them of the next steps to improve their learning.
- Develop the role of the governing body, so that it contributes more effectively to the process of monitoring and evaluation, to enable the governors to hold the school to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overwhelmingly, pupils say they like school, that their lessons are fun and they enjoy learning. This is reflected in their consistently high attendance. The large majority of pupils work enthusiastically with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to become confident and mature learners. Most try their best at all times and say they learn a lot in lessons, but a minority comments that the work in mathematics is sometimes too easy, and occasionally too hard. Behaviour is good and, when teaching is inspiring, it is exemplary. Most pupils, even the very youngest, are keen to help and support each other. This has a positive impact on their good learning and progress.

Taking account of children's typically average starting points on entry to the Reception class, and the range of pupils' differing needs, overall achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English is higher than in mathematics. Pupils' literacy skills are strong because in all classes these skills are taught well. Pupils' mathematical skills are not as strong. This is because, in Key Stage 2, pupils are not always given tasks that closely match their abilities or stretch the more able. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with more complex needs, make good progress and enjoy learning because of the sensitive guidance they receive from the teaching assistants.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. They take on an extensive range of responsibilities, such as running the school council, the road safety group, as eco-officers and acting as playground buddies or as paired readers. Overwhelmingly, pupils are polite and friendly and when thanked for holding the door open for an adult, always respond, 'that's ok, you're very welcome'. Pupils have a growing understanding of environmental issues and a good knowledge of global issues. They demonstrate an exceptional awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles and this extends through all year groups. Almost all respond very positively to the school's healthy initiatives, for example, by bringing healthy snacks to eat and taking part in a range of sporting activities.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are very strong in all classes and pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they should need it. In the very best lessons, teachers enthuse pupils through the use of imaginative resources and fun practical tasks. In most lessons, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and skilful questioning engages pupils' interest and extend their knowledge and skills. Sometimes good opportunities are provided for pupils to talk in pairs and small groups; this successfully promotes speaking and listening. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and sometimes tasks are over-directed. In the main, teachers' planning makes effective use of good quality assessment information to ensure that the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils are met. However, in Key Stage 2, mathematical activities are not always varied enough to meet the precise needs and abilities of pupils, especially the more able. In all classes, marking in literacy provides constructive comments to help pupils improve, but, in Key Stage 2, it is less informative in mathematics. For the most part, older pupils comment that their learning targets in literacy are helpful. However, they are less certain how their targets in mathematics help them to improve their work.

The curriculum is adjusted carefully to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with more complex needs. Good opportunities are provided to boost pupils' basic skills in literacy and information and communication technology. However, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their

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mathematical skills in a range of subjects. As a result of the formal collaboration with local schools, pupils take part in a wide range of creative experiences that promote their enjoyment of learning. For example, many pupils comment how much they enjoyed the 'More than Words' project that involved music, dance and drama activities. Good provision is made for the personal, social, emotional and health education of pupils.

Pupils benefit from exceptionally high-quality care, guidance and support. There is extremely effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with more complex needs, resulting in their increased motivation and greater access to the curriculum. Arrangements for pupils to move from year group to year group and then on to secondary school are organised exceptionally well. The breakfast and after-school club are well organised and provide friendly support and a good range of activities for those who attend.

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?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher bring different but valuable strengths to the leadership and management of the school. They work together well and maintain a clear oversight of the school. In this they are supported well by the effective team of middle leaders. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are planned carefully. Information gained is used well by senior and middle leaders to drive improvement and ensure that targets set are nearly always achieved. The supportive governing body manages finances prudently, but do not monitor the school's work regularly and are not yet involved fully in shaping its future direction. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection. Day-to-day procedures are clear, rigorous and robust as are the regular risk assessments that are undertaken systematically.

Good arrangements promote equal opportunity and help the school to tackle any discrimination. A notable strength is the full inclusion of those pupils with complex needs, in lessons and in all aspects of school life; they succeed at Whirley and grow in confidence and self-esteem. The very positive views expressed by their parents and carers confirm this. The school is well aware of the need to increase Key Stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics, including that of the more-able pupils. Community cohesion has strengths in pupils' involvement in the immediate area and the wider global communities. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of national communities are increasing. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Their views are regularly sought, listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon. A great many parents and carers are

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active partners in their children's learning and in the life of the school. Many comment that the wide range of information the school provides, enables them to fully support their children's learning and well-being. As a result of the formal collaboration with local schools, staff teams work together successfully to secure improvement and provide a greater range of experiences for all pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

As a result of consistently good teaching and learning, children now make good progress and attainment is rising at the end of the Reception year. The revised curriculum is exciting and caters for children's different interests, needs and abilities well. Excellent links with parents and carers ensure children settle quickly to school life. Children are safe and extremely well cared for. Relationships are exceptionally strong and children behave well. They eagerly join in and share activities and enjoy their learning. Planned activities, both indoors and outside, have a good balance between those children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. This enables children to become more independent learners. However, sometimes when children initiate their own learning, adults do not always seize the opportunity to ensure purposeful learning takes place. Consequently, on these occasions, children's progress slows. Children play happily together and clearly understand the Reception class routines. For example, without being asked, they put on their wellington boots when they use the outdoor garden area. They also quickly tell the visiting inspector, 'the boots are over there, you need to wear them if you want to come onto the mud!' Adults carefully record their regular and accurate assessments of children's achievements. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. All adults work together enthusiastically and effectively as a team. Leaders have an accurate view of what to do next and clear plans to develop the stage further.

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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

Inspectors received an above-average response to the inspection questionnaire. Almost all of the parents and carers indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider that the school does not take their suggestions and concerns fully into account. Through their extensive review of the school's records and discussions with staff, the inspectors found the school has efficient systems for seeking and acting upon parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whirley 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	67	32	30	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	71	31	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	60	56	44	41	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	55	44	41	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	72	67	33	31	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	51	46	43	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	53	49	46	1	1	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)	53	50	49	46	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	52	45	42	0	0	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	48	49	46	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	48	43	40	9	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	60	56	39	36	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	62	39	36	2	2	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	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. ■ 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.



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whirley Primary School, Macclesfield SK10 3JL

I am writing to thank you for all the help you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. Whirley is a good school. These are some of the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is good and you all get along with each other; it was lovely to see you all playing happily together and using the equipment, outside in the sunshine, during 'fizz kids' lunchtime.
- You told us that adults take extremely good care of you and help you to learn how to stay safe. We agree. You all have an impressive understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles.
- Your school provides your parents and carers with lots of information, regularly seeks their views and listens carefully to any suggestion they make.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class and learn lots of new things.
- You all try hard with your work and make good progress, especially in reading and writing. Your progress is not as strong in mathematics and we have asked your teachers to give you lots of chances to practise your mathematical skills.
- Nearly all of you told us that you enjoy learning. To help you learn more quickly in mathematics, we have asked your teachers to ensure work is always just at the right level, especially for those of you who learn more quickly. We have also asked your teachers to make your learning targets clearer and more helpful in mathematics and, to ensure when they mark your work, their comments tell you how you can improve.
- Your headteacher and other staff know how well you are all doing and carefully plan what needs to be improved. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that the governing body keeps a close check on developments too.

Thank you again. Please keep working hard and always try your best at all times.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Shields

Lead Inspector

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