

Whitegate CE Primary School

Whitegate, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 2AY

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The overwhelming majority of pupils make at least good progress, and attain standards which are significantly above the national average by the time they leave Year 6.
- The progress of pupils in 2013 was much better than in the previous two academic years, with exceptional performance in writing at Key Stage 1, and in reading at Key Stage 2.
- In the Reception class, children achieve well and enjoy their learning. Outstanding teaching and provision ensure that the vast majority make at least good progress, and achieve a good level of development before they enter Key Stage 1.
- Teachers are highly skilled at asking pupils meaningful questions and in getting them to think deeply about their learning and find things out for themselves.
- Teachers strive to ensure that all lessons are interesting enhancing pupils' confidence and providing opportunities for them to actively involved in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They say they feel safe and that they love their school and their learning, and are exceptionally welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils flourish and rise to the challenge when asked to take on board any of a vast array of responsibilities available to them.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body work exceptionally well together to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning are continually improving. Governors are very supportive. They know their school well, keep themselves abreast of new developments in education and regularly participate in school activities.
- The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school, as shown by their exceptionally high response to Parent View.
- Parents unanimously agree that their children are safe, happy and well behaved at school. The 'Friends of Whitegate School' are very proactive and 'add-value' to the experiences and achievement of pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils have a clear enough understanding of how well they are doing in their learning, or of how they can improve even further.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to ensure that they achieve to the very best of their ability.

Information about this inspection

- Nine lessons, as well as small group activities, parts of lessons, and phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) sessions, were observed. One joint observation took place with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 2 and 5 and held discussions with pupils from across the school.
- Pupils' books were scrutinised in lessons and with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector considered 77 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views. Questionnaires completed by 14 members of staff were taken into account.
- A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority school improvement service.
- A meeting was held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress, monitoring records of the quality of teaching, external evaluations of the school's work, minutes of the governing body meetings, and the school's development plan and review of its own performance.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, no pupil speaks English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a pre-school and after-school services, both of which are subject to a separate inspection.
- Since the last inspection, four teachers have retired, and there has been an increase in the number of learning assistants. A number of new governors have been appointed, including a new Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing in their learning, and of what they need to do in order to further improve
 - ensuring that all pupils are always challenged to achieve to the very best of their ability.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age. Exceptional teaching, regular assessments, good provision and a very strong partnership with parents, ensure that the majority of children make at least good progress and enter Year 1 having achieved a good level of development.
- Pupils' performance across the school improved significantly in 2013. The majority of pupils make at least good progress through Key Stage 1 to achieve standards in all subjects which are above the national average, and significantly so in reading and writing.
- Most pupils made at least good progress through Key Stage 2, to achieve standards significantly above those found nationally by the end of Year 6.
- The school ensures that the progress of all pupils is closely monitored, and that support is provided, including small group and one-to-one teaching, when it is needed. Such support is available to pupils of all abilities, including the most able who make good progress and enjoy the challenges their teachers give them.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity between different groups of pupils, although the overall performance of boys was better than that of girls at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, especially in writing. However, any gaps between boys and girls are narrower than those found nationally.
- The progress of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is closely monitored and support is put in place where it is needed through, for example, after-school classes and small group teaching activities. The attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is currently, on average, one term behind their classmates, but they make similar good progress to other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive support from well trained teachers and teaching assistants. Owing to this and good monitoring and tracking, these pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language. Regular pupils' progress meetings ensure that there are no significant variations between their achievement and that of their peers in school.
- Pupils read exceptionally well during the inspection, and demonstrated a good knowledge of different authors and genres. Phonics, is skilfully taught by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. This, along with the work of the many volunteers who listen to pupils read, has helped to ensure that pupils' attainment in reading is well above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- As a result of good mathematics teaching, which has a strong focus on problem solving, achievement is good and improving at Key Stage 1, and significantly above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teaching observed during the inspection was good, with some outstanding. A full analysis of pupils' work reveals that teaching is typically good overtime and improving.
- Teachers use a variety of methods to ensure that pupils find lessons interesting and engaging. This was the case in an outstanding Years 4/5 English lesson focusing on the story of a young slave girl's fight for freedom. Pupils demonstrated exceptional empathy, skill and understanding when questioning the motives of characters from the book, played by their classmates who maintained their roles throughout.
- All lessons are purposeful with clear objectives and measures of success. Teachers plan

consistently well, identifying what individual pupils will learn, and indicating how their lessons will ensure that they make good progress.

- Teachers ensure that pupils' work is always marked and up-to-date, and they provide opportunities for them to assess their own work and that of their classmates. The majority of teachers identify what pupils need to do to improve their learning. However, pupils' knowledge of how well they are doing varies, and some are not yet clear about what they need to do to improve even further.
- In the best lessons, all pupils are given opportunities to work independently and find things out for themselves. This is particularly the case in the Reception class where children make excellent progress because they work well cooperatively and engage in activities which they find interesting.
- Teachers encourage pupils to carry out research and find things out for themselves. This is evidenced through their outstanding work, on Ancient Egypt, for example, and the good enquiry skills that they are constantly developing.
- In most lessons, teachers ensure that various activities challenge all pupils. This was the case in a good Year 2 mathematics lesson where the teacher ensured that all pupils could identify two-dimensional regular and irregular shapes before creating their own shapes with elastic bands and 'pinned' boards. The most able pupil was able to make and identify an irregular pentagon.
- However, not all lessons are quite challenging enough. In some lessons, progress slows at times, especially when pupils are not fully challenged to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is taught consistently well across the school leading to pupils' performance in national tests in 2013 being significantly better than that of pupils nationally.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in class, and in and around the school. They thoroughly enjoy learning, are very proud of their school, and are exceptionally welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils thrive on responsibility and take great pleasure in working with and helping their fellow classmates. This is especially the case with Year 6 pupils who are trained to listen to Reception class children read, and to mentor them in the 'Oasis', which is a designated room where pupils can be involved in 'hands-on' learning activities.
- Older pupils say that they very much enjoy being members of various councils, including the school, eco and road safety councils, and raising money for various charities, including Children In Need.
- Pupils enjoy participating in extra-curricular activities and say that they are especially fond of cookery, tennis and singing. Their singing at choir practice during the inspection was of a very high standard, and greatly appreciated by the whole school during assembly
- Pupils are adamant that bullying rarely, if ever, takes place at school. Younger pupils are very confident in saying that they would always go to an adult if they had any concerns, and that everything would be 'sorted out'. The school's own surveys of pupils' views confirm that bullying is rare.
- Pupils say that behaviour is outstanding almost all the time and that lessons are never disrupted by bad behaviour. Most parents completed the on-line survey Parent View, and the overwhelming majority concurred with this view. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire agreed that behaviour was never less than good and usually outstanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of prejudice-based bullying, and say that it is never tolerated in the school. The school's good curriculum ensures that pupils know that it is wrong to discriminate against anyone on the basis of how they look, or where they are from.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Younger pupils say that assemblies often focus on safety, and that police officers, fire-fighters, road safety officers all

help them to understand, and avoid dangers relating to, for example, the use of fireworks.

- Older pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe while using the internet. They know never to accept electronic messages from strangers or to click on 'pop-ups', and how to avoid falling victim to cyber-bullying

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management have helped to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together. They are, along with all members of staff, well respected both within the church and village communities. The headteacher works exceptionally well with all members of the governing body, particularly the Chair of the Governing Body.
- All teachers who completed the inspection questionnaire said that they were proud to work at the school and that the school was well led and managed.
- Teachers are especially appreciative of the professional development and informal mentoring that they receive. They indicate that this has helped them to improve various aspects of their teaching practice, including phonics teaching and working with pupils with special educational needs.
- Senior leaders monitor the performance of teachers and teaching assistants through regular observations. Most teachers are set three targets. Typically, they relate closely to pupils' achievement, personal development and whole-school priorities. Governors do not accept recommendations for either promotions or pay awards unless targets are met or exceeded.
- Pupils' social and moral development is strong; they care deeply about each other and work exceptionally well together. Their spiritual understanding is enhanced through learning about Christianity and major world faiths. Their cultural development is enhanced through visits to museums and through music lessons.
- The school's links with, and visits to, a school in Cape Town, has helped pupils to develop their understanding of world communities, and provided opportunities for them to learn about, for example, Nelson Mandela and life in South Africa.
- The school is careful to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged by their personal, or family circumstances. For example, judiciously making funding available when it is needed under particular circumstances, for school trips and for access to the privately run Sunlights, the before-school club, and Twilights the after-school club.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to the school. In addition, the school works closely with an independent consultancy, which has reviewed various aspects of its services and provided advice in a number of areas, including assessing pupils' work and analysing data.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed and knowledgeable. They know precisely where the school's strengths lie, and know what it needs to do in order to become outstanding. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, as evidenced by the Chair of the Governing Body's role in teaching music and singing, and the involvement of other governors in delivering assemblies and listening to pupils read. Governors are skilled in the execution of their duties, and ensure that they keep abreast of development through regular training. They regularly hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account through managing their performance, and set challenging targets, which aim to improve the quality of teaching and raise levels of achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent. They are fully aware that, for example, that small group teaching and support for travel to school visits, is raising the attainment for eligible pupils. Governors have recently authorised the allocation of the new Primary School Sport funding for physical education and sports to develop the sports coaching skills of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111338
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	426243

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Duthie
Headteacher	Ian Percival
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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