

Whitehall Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102411
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	355183
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter James
Headteacher	Manjit Bringan
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2008
School address	Cowley Road Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2LX
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, including 15 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with governors, groups of pupils, parents and carers, and leaders at all levels. They looked at the school improvement plan, assessment information, school and local authority monitoring information, lesson plans, school policies and 106 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- Has the consistency and quality of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection?
- Have improvements in attainment and progress over the last three years, indicated by data, been maintained.
- Do all pupils make at least good progress, especially the boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Is the curriculum meeting the needs and interests of all the pupils?
- Have recent improvements in attendance been maintained?

Information about the school

Whitehall is larger than most infant schools; it has increased in size since the previous inspection. It has ten classes and a Nursery Unit. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The school has almost three times the national average of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are Asian or Asian British of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian heritage and a minority of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Basic Skills Quality Mark 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

Whitehall is a rapidly improving school that is providing a good education for its pupils; several aspects of its work are outstanding. Partnership work is excellent and the school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The very high quality leadership provided by the headteacher is the driving force behind the school's recent improvements. She has developed a very strong sense of teamwork within the school and also with parents and carers. An effective senior leadership team, a committed and enthusiastic staff, and a very proactive governing body support the headteacher very well. Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on improving pupils' learning opportunities. Rigorous monitoring of classroom practice and a clear view of pupils' learning needs have resulted in pupils across the whole school making good progress. This is clearly evident from the improved results achieved by the pupils since the previous inspection and last year the overall outcomes were significantly above the national average for the first time. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school's work. As one parent, among many, commented, 'My daughter has progressed well beyond my expectations and she is extremely happy at school.' The school has worked hard to improve boys' attainment and to close the gap with that of the girls. However, the school is aware that this remains a focus and is continuing to take appropriate actions.

Much of the teaching observed was good or outstanding, with no inadequate teaching seen. However, there remain some inconsistencies. These include the use of marking to help pupils understand how to improve their work, and increased opportunities across all classes for pupils to assess their own learning and progress. There are examples of outstanding practice within the school that can be shared. The school has a clear view of the actions required for further improvements. Consequently, coupled with the recent significant progress, the school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is an undoubted strength of the school. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents unanimously say that their children enjoy coming to school and this was very obvious during the inspection. This is also reflected in the much improved attendance figures and the school is grateful for the support of parents, carers and governors in this achievement. The 'soft start' to the school day, with parents and carers encouraged to join their children in class, has led to excellent punctuality. Behaviour is good in lessons and sometimes outstanding, such as in assemblies and when moving around school. Pupils work together exceptionally well and also show

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independent learning skills. Their contribution to the school community is outstanding, and they are keen to take on responsibilities, such as in the school council.

The curriculum is still developing but is already well planned and reflects the diverse nature of the community. The well-attended out-of-school activities, often run in conjunction with the adjacent junior school, are used well to enrich pupils' learning. This is just one example of the excellent transition arrangements when pupils enter the school and when they transfer to the junior school. The school has effective links with other local schools and support agencies to sustain and support learning. Several parents commented on the welcoming environment provided by the school; one wrote, 'The staff are friendly and helpful and there is a lovely feeling like one big family.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly for boys in their writing, by:
 - providing increased opportunities for writing across all age groups and in different subjects
 - providing pupils with opportunities to contribute their ideas on the planning and delivery of the curriculum.
- Improve the overall consistency of teaching so that it is all at least good, by:
 - more consistent use of marking to inform pupils of the next steps in their learning
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and reflect on their learning
 - further sharing of good and outstanding practice in teaching through peer support.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of pupils' learning is good overall. Children start school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, particularly in language and literacy and in calculating. There are excellent induction procedures for the new pupils and their parents and carers, consequently the children make a good start in their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good progress is evident for all groups of pupils. This was particularly true in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when the more able pupils responded enthusiastically to some very challenging work and were also able to assess their own progress and share this with their neighbour. The progress of the higher-ability pupils was a concern at the time of the previous inspection but the school has worked hard to address this. As a result, these pupils now progress well and achieve outcomes above those typically expected for similar pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported

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by teachers and teaching assistants through an appropriate range of intervention strategies and make good progress in line with other pupils.

Observations during lessons and around school confirm that pupils’ behaviour is good and a credit to the school, reflecting good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show considerable respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. This has resulted in a harmonious community that enhances pupils’ learning experiences. This was particularly evident in the school assemblies observed during the inspection. Pupils’ excellent understanding of how to have a healthy lifestyle has led to the school receiving the Healthy Schools award. The school’s health ambassadors in Year 2 are proactive in identifying healthy lunch boxes, which leads to awards in assembly. If pupils are worried or upset they are sure that staff will listen to their concerns and act upon them promptly. Consequently, parents and carers agree that the school is exceptionally effective in making sure that their children feel safe, a view shared by the pupils themselves who have an excellent understanding of staying safe. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to school and local communities through the work of the enthusiastic school council and regular collections for a number of charities. The school has established links with a school in Nepal and this is providing more opportunities for the pupils to appreciate other cultures from a contrasting area of the world. They value the school community and participate fully in school life. This is reflected in their obvious enjoyment in coming to school. Pupils’ good behaviour, good social skills and much improved basic skills ensure that they are well prepared for their next stage of education and beyond.

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	3
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	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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good across the school, with examples of outstanding practice. Nevertheless, there remain some inconsistencies. Pupils generally have a clear understanding of what they are going to learn in lessons, and what this will look like in practice. This clear understanding creates a calm, purposeful working atmosphere with the pupils eager to learn. In the best lessons, pupils have the opportunity to check their own work during and at the end of lessons and decide if they have progressed in their learning. This is becoming established across the school but is not yet consistent. From the analysis of the pupils’ work in their books, marking of work has clearly improved recently and, particularly in Year 2, is of a high standard; however, there are some variations and the school recognises that there is scope for teachers to share best practice. The teachers have a good understanding of the ability levels of the pupils from the rigorous assessment and tracking systems in school. As a result, they are able to match the work appropriately to challenge the pupils and this is key to the good progress they make. The effective support provided by the teaching assistants is another valued factor in the pupils’ good progress.

The school’s curriculum is developing well. Creative ideas are used in a positive way to engage pupils and encourage links between subjects so that the learning is relevant to the pupils. Coherent and consistent planning enables key skills to be developed from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 2. This is particularly true in information and communication technology (ICT) where skills are becoming well embedded. The school’s curriculum is well supported by the internet learning platform that is used extensively by pupils working at home. The curriculum is enriched by vibrant displays around the school and by the pupils’ regular involvement in out-of-school activities.

Good relationships throughout the school, coupled with thorough risk assessments, ensure that all pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for. Parents, carers and pupils agree strongly that pupils enjoy school and progress well. Transition arrangements are effective and well established, both for new pupils and parents and carers and also when the pupils move on to the adjacent junior school. Attendance has improved significantly to just above the national average. The governors’ proactive decision to appoint an attendance officer has had a very noticeable impact.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school are very strong at all levels, including the governing body. The headteacher and senior team communicate high expectations to staff about securing improvements and the staff respond positively and with enthusiasm. Self-evaluation is good. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a commitment by all parties to improve provision further. Consequently, there is clear evidence of improvements since the previous inspection. Teamwork is promoted strongly and is reflected in the school’s detailed and appropriately focused improvement plan. Leadership and management responsibilities are successfully distributed among staff, allowing subject leaders to contribute effectively and to develop their own confidence and leadership ability. Their enthusiasm is infectious. Members of the governing body fulfil their statutory duties and beyond. They are supportive and challenging and their proactive approach to taking the lead in certain areas of improvement has been much appreciated by other senior leaders and the headteacher in particular. This has allowed her to allocate more time to the further development of teaching and learning and the curriculum to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. Links with parents and carers are incredibly strong and much appreciated by almost every single parent from the questionnaire returns. The school has taken a strong lead in providing opportunities for parents and carers to take up their own learning opportunities and several commented on how this has helped their own self-esteem as well as helping them to support their own child’s learning. This coupled with the pupils’ good progress demonstrates the school’s effective procedures for promoting equal opportunities.

Safeguarding procedures are effective, and fully meet statutory requirements in terms of vetting procedures for staff and other adults who support work in school. Good attention is also paid to health and safety requirements. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. This is particularly true of the school community itself but also in improving pupils’ awareness of other faiths and cultures further afield in the United Kingdom and across the world. One parent commented: ‘My child embraces relationships with all cultures and nationalities as second nature and is enriched by the open and inclusive atmosphere in the school.’

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children make good progress in their learning. The children are secure and well settled and have good relationships with their peers and with the adults. They are developing good cooperative working skills with other children and also show independent learning when choosing their own activities and deciding when to access their snack. Girls’ attainment on entry is higher than the boys’ and remains so at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, despite the teachers’ effective use of ‘Good Scientist’ cards and ‘Thinking Hats’ that appeal to the boys. The children work closely with the adults on assessing their learning and whether they are achieving their targets for improvement. Staff meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual children and ensure that the planned activities are appropriate to the children’s needs. The quality of teaching is good and the learning environment is well resourced both inside and outside. The deployment of staff in the outdoor area needs to be consistently sufficient to ensure that opportunities for developing learning are not missed; for example through providing opportunities for ‘incidental’ writing, particularly for the boys. Induction procedures are well embedded and parents and carers are confident that they meet their needs and those of their child. There is a clear focus on maximising pupils’ learning and progress. Parents and carers say that they are kept well informed both informally and at the regular parents meetings. Safeguarding procedures are robust and therefore the children feel safe and happy.

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

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Views of parents and carers

It is very evident from conversations with some of the parents and carers and from the questionnaires returned that they are very happy with and supportive of the school. In seven of the questions explored either 100% or 99% of parents and carers were entirely satisfied with the school. In all the other areas the questionnaire analysis showed that more than 90% of the parents and carers were fully satisfied. These are very positive figures indeed. Many parents and carers took the time and trouble to write positive comments about the school which the inspection team were very grateful.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitehall Infant 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 completed 106 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 368 pupils registered at the school. (Percentage of returns broadly in line with national average.)

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	72	29	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	69	32	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	68	64	36	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	58	43	41	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	65	36	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	57	54	48	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	58	41	39	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)	55	52	38	36	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	57	54	40	38	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	54	42	40	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	47	48	45	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	61	37	35	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	68	64	36	34	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



25 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitehall Infant School, Uxbridge UB8 2LX

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. We enjoyed meeting and talking to many of you in lessons or over lunch. We also were impressed looking at your work and visiting your lessons. You obviously try really hard with your work and with your behaviour.

Your school is a good school that cares for you brilliantly. We know from our visit that you love coming to school, enjoy your learning and behave really well. This also means that you feel safe at school, which is really important. The headteacher, the staff and the governors are all working incredibly hard to help the school in every way.

Everyone in the school wants to improve it even more, so we are suggesting how this might be done. We have asked the school leaders to help lessons to become even better all of the time by allowing the teachers to work together and share the things they do well, and also to make sure that you always know how to improve your work. By doing this we are sure that your work will get even better.

Having met you we are all very confident that you will want to help too. You can do this by trying your best at all times and checking that your work in lessons is as good as expected. You are already getting good at this.

We would like to wish you all the very best in the future at Whitehall Infant School and also when you move on to your other schools.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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