

# Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Brixham Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7RB

## Inspection dates

11–12 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Often, staff do not have high enough expectations about what pupils can achieve.
- The progress pupils make across the school is variable. Outcomes by the end of key stages 1 and 2 are below the national average.
- Not all teachers are accurate in assessing pupils' starting points. Some staff do not correctly record the amount of progress pupils make. This means that leaders do not always have the right information about pupils' performance.
- Teachers do not consistently match work to the needs of pupils. This includes pupils who are most able and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The attendance of some pupils is low.
- Skills in writing are not well enough developed. This is because pupils do not get enough chances to write longer pieces of work.
- Subject leaders do not always effectively monitor pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not spent well enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do as well as they could.
- The new governing body does not regularly check some policies or the website. Governors do not receive accurate performance information from the school. This means that they do not hold leaders effectively to account. Governors have not checked whether leaders have produced a pupil premium report for this academic year.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is a very caring and inclusive community. Leaders rightly pride themselves on ensuring that pupils are well supported and ready to learn. All staff, including members of the therapeutic team, work hard to support pupils' personal development.
- Children make a good start to their learning in early years. They make strong progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have identified the areas that need to improve. They have already taken effective action to improve the teaching of mathematics. Communication with parents and carers has strengthened.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress from their starting points by:
  - raising teachers' expectations so that they match work to the ability levels of pupils
  - providing more opportunities, through extended written work, for pupils to apply the skills they have learned
  - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' starting points and progress accurately so that senior leaders have the right information about how pupils are doing.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - maximising the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils make good progress and that the attainment gap between them and their peers narrows
  - improving the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by ensuring that leaders check more thoroughly that the work provided matches pupils' needs
  - ensuring that subject leaders monitor effectively pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility to secure higher outcomes
  - improving the attendance of some pupils
  - making sure that the governing body monitors the website and policies, receives accurate school performance information, and holds leaders effectively to account, for example by ensuring that they produce an annual pupil premium report.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the school's work may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, improvements in the quality of education have been too variable. Pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. This is because of inconsistency in the quality of teaching and assessment.
- Subject leaders, although enthusiastic, do not consistently perform their roles well enough. For example, they do not check regularly that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are in line with the progress shown in individual pupils' books. This means that senior leaders sometimes have inaccurate information about pupils' progress.
- Management of the pupil premium funding is variable. Some disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points. Leaders have not yet produced a pupil premium report for this academic year. There is no indication of the spending plans for this year.
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. Many praised the teachers, saying how kind and supportive they were. A typical comment was, 'Teachers are easy to talk to and are friendly and caring. They understand my child very well.'
- Senior leaders are passionate about ensuring the welfare of vulnerable pupils. This approach underpins the ethos of this inclusive school. Until recently, leaders spent a disproportionate proportion of their time in attending multi-agency meetings. They acknowledge that this has had an impact on some aspects of the school's management. They have now appointed a specialist welfare officer to support pupils and their families, including when attending multi-agency meetings. This has freed up the time of senior leaders. They show a strong determination to improve the school and have accurately identified the areas that need attention. They have already improved phonics teaching and mathematics across much of the school.
- Senior leadership has developed a 'transformation team' of middle leaders. Their role is to ensure that the curriculum is interesting and relevant to pupils. The exceptional science and engineering laboratory provides pupils with valuable 'hands-on' experiences. For example, during the inspection, pupils were investigating what happens to potatoes when left out in the light, and pupils in Year 5 were excited about the imminent hatching of some chicks. Pupils enjoy learning key words and sentences in Spanish. The school provides a wide range of trips. Visitors to school often include inspirational people who have accomplished challenging tasks. Recently, pupils listened to a climber who had successfully ascended Everest. There is a growing number of extra-curricular activities. Workshops called 'enabling enterprise' help pupils to understand the characteristics that will help them to do well when they start work. These include having a positive attitude and persevering.
- The physical education and sport premium is used well to promote different sports. Participation rates have improved for all pupils. When asked, pupils said that they enjoyed the many activities that the school provides.

- Leaders have established a programme of events to ensure greater parental involvement. This is having a positive impact. Parents said that they valued the school's videos on subjects such as, 'how to read with your child'.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has been through a period of upheaval. New governors have only recently been appointed. Currently, they do not have a deep enough understanding of how the school is performing. They do not receive accurate information from the school regarding the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. Minutes of meetings show that governors do not always hold leaders sufficiently to account. The monitoring of pupil premium funding is not rigorous enough. The school's website has not been frequently checked. Some key policies have not been updated. However, this was urgently addressed during the inspection, and put right.
- Since taking up their new role, governors have conducted a skills audit. This shows that governors have valuable expertise in business, safeguarding and finance. They are currently looking to recruit a governor with experience of education. Governors are determined to improve the quality of education provided by the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They know whom to go to if they ever have any concerns. There are stringent checks on making sure that staff are suitable to work with children.
- The school runs an extensive range of safeguarding training. Procedures are followed carefully and records of concerns are well maintained. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View say that the school keeps their children safe. The school has effective links with external agencies and so is able to access specialist support when needed.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good throughout the school.
- Assessment procedures are too variable. Mathematics is tracked on two different systems, which staff find confusing. Some teachers are inaccurate in assessing pupils' starting points and the progress that pupils make. This means that teachers do not routinely use assessment to plan lessons that meet pupils' different abilities.
- A few parents expressed some concerns about the support provided to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that leaders spent a considerable amount of time working on pupils' individual education plans. However, they did not spend enough time on checking these plans to ensure that the work provided matched the specific needs of each pupil.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to write extended pieces of work. This means that pupils do not get enough chances to refine their skills.

- The teaching of phonics is improving. Staff have been well trained, and phonics sessions build upon pupils' existing abilities. Pupils' reading skills are well developed, for example through the numerous activities provided by the school librarian.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. For example, they support those pupils who find it challenging to manage their own behaviour.
- Displays in most classrooms enable pupils to refer to useful material to help them in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 were seen carefully checking their answers about the properties of three-dimensional shapes.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents praise the support provided by the staff, including the skilled therapeutic team. They say that staff help to improve their children's self-confidence and emotional well-being. A typical comment by a parent was, 'The school are very supportive of both the children and parents – they are always available to talk to when you have a problem.' Pupils say how much they value the support that is available to them. All know whom to contact if they have any concerns. One pupil expressed the views of many when they said, 'The staff care about us and want to do everything they can to help us do well.'
- Staff promote pupils' safety well. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the roads and railways. Pupils learn useful information to help them stay safe when online. They know about the importance of not revealing personal information about themselves.
- Most pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying at the school is rare. They felt that if they ever had a problem, it would be sorted out quickly by staff.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around the school, pupils conduct themselves well. For example, during the inspection, pupils did not run along the school's long corridors. At the end of play- and lunchtime, pupils went sensibly to their classrooms.
- In lessons, pupils generally behave well. They listen carefully to the teacher and readily engage in the activities that have been set. However, when tasks are not well suited to pupils' needs, a few can lose focus.
- Some parents who spoke to inspectors expressed concerns over the behaviour of pupils. They also had concerns about the use of the school's behaviour monitoring system. School records and discussions with pupils indicate that behaviour is usually good. Most pupils said that they felt the school's use of the behaviour monitoring system was fair.

- The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of pupils. It is now broadly similar to the national average. However, the attendance for some pupils is still low. School leaders are working on further improving this area. They have recently put in place a number of strategies that are beginning to have an impact.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that pupils' progress is often inconsistent across the school. Their self-evaluation, that outcomes require improvement, is accurate.
- Because the pupil premium funding is not used well enough, disadvantaged pupils make variable progress. For example, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers last year. In 2017, by the end of Year 6, fewer than half of them reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Work in current pupils' books shows that progress is still variable.
- Most-able pupils often do not make enough progress. Last year, with the exception of mathematics in key stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher standard was below the national average in all subjects at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Work in current pupils' books shows that teachers do not stretch most-able pupils enough with challenging work.
- Pupils typically enter key stage 1 with below-average starting points. They make variable progress and leave Year 2 with below-average results. Last year, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was very low. Leaders have worked hard to address this issue, and progress in many classes is improving. Evidence seen in pupils' books indicates that greater proportions are on track to meet the expected standard, particularly in reading and writing, than last year.
- Pupils make variable progress in key stage 2. In 2017, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard was below the national average. Work in pupils' books shows that progress remains variable. Leaders agree that the percentage of pupils in the current Year 6 who are on track to meet the expected standard in writing is low. In most year groups, progress in mathematics is improving; however, it is still inconsistent in Year 6.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make the same variable progress as their peers. This is because staff do not consistently ensure that they provide work that helps these pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils' phonics skills are improving. Previously, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national average. Work in current pupils' books indicates that pupils are making stronger progress in this subject.
- Pupils do well in developing their scientific skills. They have many opportunities to think scientifically and make predictions.
- Pupils develop good geographical skills. For example, in Year 5, they knew about the different ways in which mountains form.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children's skills and abilities are often below those typical for their age when they enter the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in communication, English and mathematics. Children make good progress from their starting points across early years. The proportion gaining a good level of development is improving each year. However, it is still a little below the national average.
- Teaching is effective. Staff are adept in making an accurate assessment of children's progress. They carefully help children who need to catch up. They adjust the curriculum to ensure that children have the right type of work that matches their needs. For example, staff help children with communication difficulties to develop their speech from words into sentences.
- Staff have a good understanding of each child's different social and emotional needs. Relationships are warm and caring, and this helps children to feel happy and safe. Parents report that they are pleased with the support given to their children.
- Leadership is strong. Members of the large staff team work well together, communicating with each other often to ensure that children in all classes get the same effective support.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are attractive and well organised. Children have many activities that stimulate their interests, such as making 'cakes' in the outdoor mud kitchen.

## School details

Unique reference number	136512
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10046415

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	668
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair	Tim Pascall
Headteacher	Karen Salter
Telephone number	0118 937 5566
Website	<a href="http://whitleyparkprimaryschool.co.uk">whitleyparkprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk">admin@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information about the pupil premium, SEN and/or disabilities, and aspects related to governance, on its website.
- Whitley Park is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Provision in early years consists of a part-time Nursery and full-time Reception.
- Nearly half of the pupils are supported through pupil premium funding. This is well above the national average.
- A quarter of the pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. This is above average.
- Many members of the governing body are new. There is currently an acting chair.
- The school has a large therapeutic team. It consists of a child welfare officer who deals with issues related to child protection and children's welfare, a mental health worker, and specialist play and music therapists.



- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school, with most observations being carried out jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' books, and listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with pupils, the governing body, the headteacher and other senior leaders. There was also a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information provided by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance records, procedures for safeguarding, and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 81 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also held informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day.

## Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Marshall	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Beswick	Ofsted Inspector

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