

Whitemoor Academy

Whitemoor, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL26 7YQ

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The rate of pupils' progress, particularly in reading and writing across the school, is not yet good because teaching is inconsistent.
- In some classes, expectations are not high enough for all pupils to work at a fast enough rate to improve their skills.
- When introducing learning, some teachers talk for too long and pupils lose interest.
- At times, work is not set at the right level for pupils and is too easy or too hard.
- Progress from pupils' starting points to the beginning of Year 4 is too slow.
- The teaching of phonics (matching letters and sounds) is not good and as a result, reading, particularly by boys, is below average.
- Governors have worked hard to achieve change over the past few years but have not been rigorous enough in monitoring the school and bringing about improvement. Past inadequacies have left a legacy of underperformance by some staff and pupils.
- Procedures for managing the performance of teachers have not been checked closely enough and there has not been enough training for teaching to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching in Years 4 to 6 is good and these pupils achieve well, resulting in broadly average standards by Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics have improved across the school and most pupils now make good progress.
- The curriculum provides some exciting activities, promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say they feel safe in school.
- The new executive headteacher has an excellent understanding of what needs doing. She has already put many good new strategies in place that are starting to bring about improvements.
- The new academy status has brought high quality expertise and new resources into the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, all of them jointly with the executive headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a few short visits to observe pupils' learning and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders and managers, the Chairman of the Governing Body, academy leaders and some pupils.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of the 15 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and spoke to several parents in the playground. Account was also taken of 12 responses to the inspection questionnaire from staff.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average village primary school. It caters for children from the local area and a few who come from further afield.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is also above average.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is above average.
- The school has provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Reception-age children share their learning with their older peers in Year 1.
- A private pre-school shares the school site. It is not managed by the school's governing body.
- The school provides an early-morning club and several after-school clubs, all of which are managed by the governing body
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently become part of The Cornwall Academy Trust with three other local primary schools. The new executive headteacher has been in post for the past three weeks. She has been appointed for the next five terms and works part-time at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to speed up progress in reading and writing, particularly in Reception to Year 3 by:
 - providing training for all staff in the teaching of phonics
 - ensuring that phonics sessions thoroughly engage boys so that they want to read every day
 - making sure that teachers do not talk for too long when introducing lessons
 - making sure that teachers have high enough expectations of each pupil so that tasks are sufficiently demanding and enough work is completed in each lesson.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' progress by providing training for governors so that they understand how well the school is performing.
- Improve systems for managing the performance of staff so that all staff have opportunities to improve their skills, undertake training and seek promotion.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 to 3 do not make good enough progress from their starting points. Their progress in reading and writing is too slow. The teaching of phonics varies and not all pupils do enough in phonics sessions because they spend too long listening to others and not enough time taking part actively. This is particularly true of boys, who quickly become bored with the overlong sessions. As a result, girls achieve better than boys in reading.
- Achievement improves across Years 4 to 6 and pupils start to catch up so that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, many have achieved the standards expected of them.
- Topic books show that older pupils are beginning to use writing well in subjects other than English. Extended pieces of writing in Years 5 and 6, for example, show that pupils have written some accurate and exciting historical recounts about the Aztecs and about slavery in ancient Greece. Similarly, in geography they show their interests and concerns in their descriptions of the rainforests and sustainability.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved since the previous inspection because of a whole-school approach to more practical tasks. As a result, standards are rising across the school and pupils now attain just above expected levels by Year 6. Pupils across the school use their mathematics skills well in science and geography to undertake surveys, create tally charts and measure different lengths.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality individual and small-group support. As a result, these pupils make at least the progress expected of them. Those who fall behind are given additional help, enabling gaps in the attainment between groups to narrow.
- The small proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium reach higher standards in English and similar standards in mathematics to other pupils in the school. They reach similar standards to all pupils nationally.
- A group of parents spoken to by the inspector said they were pleased with the school but rightly said that progress could be a little better.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Progress in lessons slows when teachers talk for too long at the beginning as they introduce the topic. Too often they do not challenge pupils, to make them think about how they are going to respond. Progress also dips when tasks are too easy and not enough is planned for the more able pupils. They then finish quickly but do not complete enough work in the time allowed.
- Lessons are generally calm and relationships are positive. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well.
- Teaching varies too much in quality. It is strongest in Years 4 to 6 and this is evident in pupils' books and in the pace of their learning. For example, in their mathematics lessons, different tasks for pupils of different abilities were well planned to excite and engage them. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard to remind pupils how to use instruments to measure angles accurately. Good quality questions extended pupils' thinking skills so that they searched for answers and maintained interest, achieving well.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved across the school and, as a result, all groups of pupils make better progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing.
- Assessment is uneven. There are examples of good marking in the older age groups, helping pupils to improve their work and encouraging them to respond. However, this is less evident for younger pupils.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support groups of pupils and to enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to take part fully in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. Their attitudes are positive and there is no evidence of learning being disrupted by challenging behaviour. In the playground and on the field, pupils are considerate. Older boys, for example, said that they were playing football in one corner of the field because it meant that younger pupils would not get hurt.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They say there is no bullying of any kind. Older pupils say they know about cyber bullying and are unaware of any involving pupils at the school. Parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Occasionally pupils do not listen in class as well as they might. They sometimes become restless when tasks are not matched to their needs or abilities or when the teacher talks for too long.
- In discussion with the inspector, groups of pupils said that they enjoy school. They value the activities that enable them to take part in exciting topics, such as the forthcoming trip to London by older pupils and the close link with the local Eden Project that is helping them to understand about the importance of rainforests.
- Attendance across the school has improved and most pupils now attend regularly.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Pupils are given opportunities to help around the school, take on simple jobs and learn about responsibility. For example, in the dinner hall, pupils know who is responsible for clearing away the chairs each day. Both boys and girls take their turn and work quickly and efficiently to complete their tasks. Several offer help to others to complete the work more quickly.
- Pupils raise funds for different charities and care about their community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development has improved. It is promoted well through the good range of curriculum topics, trips and performances, meaning that pupils gain confidence and have a good awareness of the wider world.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The new executive headteacher understands that there are some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and that this affects pupils' learning. She is working closely with senior staff to improve the rates of pupils' progress. However, the new leadership team has not been in post long enough to improve teaching despite having a clear and accurate view of what needs to be done.
- The executive headteacher has already reviewed the quality of teaching and learning, arranged visits for teachers to other schools and has engaged pupils in making decisions about how they would like to see the school improve. A thorough review of safeguarding has ensured that pupils are safe and secure.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and improved since the last inspection and this has had a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils now have a good awareness of life outside Cornwall. The curriculum has had a positive impact on progress in mathematics but has yet to make a difference to progress in reading and writing in some year groups.
- Too little emphasis on training in the past has limited improvements across the school. For example, new teachers have received little support or training and this has resulted in the inconsistent quality of teaching currently seen at the school.
- Leaders promote equality by making sure that pupils who benefit from pupil-premium funding are effectively supported through additional teaching.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and rightly say their children are happy there, although several parents would like more information about their child's progress. Parents are pleased with the new leadership arrangements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed and hard working but have not challenged the school well enough

in the past few years. They have a clear view of the direction they want the school to follow but have not checked pupils' achievement thoroughly enough to identify areas for improvement. The recent change to academy status has brought new impetus to the management of the school and they are now working quickly to bring about improvement. Governors are aware that teaching requires improvement and that there has been a lack of emphasis on improving the performance of staff. Systems to manage the performance of staff are now in place and governors are working to eradicate underperformance. Governors make sure that finances are appropriately managed and that the money allocated for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is spent on those pupils.

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	138963
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	418358

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Jasper
Executive Headteacher	Vanessa Bragg
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2009
Telephone number	01726 822274
Fax number	01276 822274
Email address	head@whitemoor.cornwall.sch.uk

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