

# Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Brixham Road, Reading, RG2 7RB

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses. It is not good because

- Until recently the school's leaders, including governors, did not manage pupils' learning well enough, resulting in pupils not reaching sufficiently high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are not making enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are not closing the gap in attainment with the other pupils quickly enough.
- Not all teaching is challenging the most able pupils to reach the highest levels.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunities show how well they are learning. The pace of learning is not brisk enough.
- Behaviour in lessons is orderly, but some pupils are not fully engaged in the learning.
- Subject leaders and middle leaders are not playing a full part in raising achievement in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Meetings held to review and discuss pupils' progress have not had time to fully address previous underachievement and close gaps in learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and her senior leadership team have a clear plan in place that has already led to improvements in progress, teaching, behaviour and attendance. They are fully supported by the governing body and the staff.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and guided reading are well taught and organised, and achievement in reading is improving.
- Pupils get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception due to good provision and teaching. Teaching is also good in Year 6.
- There has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour, and this has impacted positively on learning.
- Pastoral care is very good for all pupils, and is exemplary for vulnerable pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons or parts of lessons, of which eight were joint observations with the headteacher or her deputies.
- Inspectors undertook two learning walks to see how well phonics (the sounds letters make) and guided reading are taught.
- Pupils' work books were examined, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors analysed data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. They also scrutinised the school's own documentation, including self-evaluation and documents relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- The views of 17 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, and some parents were spoken to in the playground at the start of the school day.
- The views of 50 staff were gathered from the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Janet Maul, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Mankelow

Additional Inspector

David Beddard

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Whitley Park is much larger than the average-sized school.
- More than a third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. There is a wide range of backgrounds represented in the school, but the largest ethnic minority group is White and Black Caribbean.
- The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is similar to the proportion found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to be supported by the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for pupils entitled to free school meals, in local authority care or with parents in the armed forces) is very high at 54%. Nearly all of these pupils are eligible because they are entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils with parents in the armed forces, and only an extremely small number in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or who have special educational needs and are supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2013 and for two terms worked in tandem with the previous headteacher. Since September, the new headteacher has been in charge of the school. There are two deputy headteachers, one of whom joined the school this year.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better. This should be done by:
  - matching work in lessons to pupils' abilities, in particular making sure that work is hard enough for the most able pupils
  - ensuring that the pace of learning is brisk
  - using questioning targeted at individual pupils to ensure that any who are not engaged become fully focused on their work
  - give pupils adequate opportunities to make improvements to their work after it has been marked
  - using the meetings about pupils' progress to identify pupils' learning needs, and closely target support for them.
- Develop the school's middle leadership by:
  - ensuring that year group and subject leaders fully understand the school's data and can use them to drive improvements in achievement and teaching
  - taking greater responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and supporting colleagues to develop best practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Pupils' attainment has been low for the past three years at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and their progress too slow. The school has taken steps to address this with better teaching and targeted support and, in the current year, progress is much better in reading and starting to improve in writing and mathematics. However, these improvements are recent and have not had time to become secure and embedded.
- Children join the school with skills at a low level compared to most children of the same age. They make good progress both socially and academically in the Nursery and Reception classes; but, nevertheless, by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is still well below that of pupils nationally.
- Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 1, but not at a fast enough rate to close the gap with other pupils nationally.
- In Key Stage 2, the rate of progress has improved this year and pupils in Years 3 to 5 are doing better. In Year 6, progress is more rapid.
- At the end of Year 1, pupils performed well in the national phonics (learning about the sounds letters make) check due to good phonics teaching. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium did not do as well as the other pupils in the year group, but performed better than similar pupils nationally. Progress throughout the school is stronger in reading than it is in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 who are eligible for the pupil premium are closing the gap in attainment with other pupils.
- However, in the 2013 national end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were, on average, 10 months behind other pupils in both mathematics and writing, and 18 months behind in reading. The current picture of achievement for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is more positive. In some year groups and subjects they are making more progress than other pupils. Nevertheless, the gap in attainment is still wide and not closing quickly enough.
- Pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs are attaining at a lower level than similar pupils nationally, but good support from teachers and well-trained teaching assistants is enabling these pupils to make better progress than other pupils throughout the school.
- The performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with their peers. The largest minority ethnic group of White and Black Caribbean pupils is attaining at a slightly higher level.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Poor teaching and low expectations in the past have led to low attainment and slow progress. There is now more effective teaching, resulting in improving progress for pupils. However, the quality of teaching remains variable throughout the school. The senior leadership team has had a positive impact on teaching by working with teachers to improve lessons, and by modelling good practice.
- Teaching and provision in Nursery, Reception and Year 6 are strong, resulting in pupils making good progress. In other year groups, the standard of teaching is improving but remains more variable.
- In most lessons, teachers pitch learning at the right levels for different groups and pupils confirm this by saying that the difficulty level is 'just about right'. However, in the weaker lessons the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and so are not attaining the highest levels in their assessments. The headteacher is starting to address this through pupil progress meetings where the headteacher and class teacher discuss each pupil individually and plan what needs to be done for the pupil to reach the next level. The impact of this strategy in terms of

closing gaps has not yet been fully established.

- In the best lessons, learning moves at a brisk pace and all pupils are engaged. In less strong lessons, the pace of learning is not brisk enough and lessons do not incorporate sufficient challenge. In these lessons, questioning is not used sufficiently well to engage the pupils and their attention wanes as a result.
- Marking has improved significantly, with work marked thoroughly and good feedback given to pupils to help them to improve their work. In some classes teachers do not give their pupils adequate opportunities to make improvements to their work after it has been marked.
- Most pupils are aware of their targets and know what they need to do to improve.
- The teaching of phonics and guided reading has recently been reviewed, and is now led and taught very well, with the result that pupils are making good progress with learning to read. Reading is a relative strength of the school.
- Well-trained teaching assistants support pupils effectively.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because sometimes pupils are not fully engaged in their learning when the teaching does not capture their imagination.
- Poor behaviour has concerned parents, staff and pupils in the past. Behaviour has improved, and pupils report that they now feel safe and that bullying is rare. If bullying does occur it is dealt with swiftly.
- Record keeping for behavioural and racist incidents for individual pupils is thorough and used to monitor the pupil's social progress; however, record keeping for behavioural and racist incidents for the whole school needs to be improved so that trends can be easily monitored.
- While pupils are orderly in class, they will sometimes sit back and allow others to take the lead. This disengagement is not always addressed by adults.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are enjoyable and orderly. There is a high level of supervision from the school's well-trained teaching assistants, who take every opportunity to model polite and friendly behaviours. There are interesting activities and equipment for the pupils to use and enjoy.
- Attendance has improved this year, although it is not yet in line with the national figures.
- Exclusions have dramatically reduced and, when they become necessary, the reintegration of pupils back into school is well managed.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement. The actions of leaders are now having a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of teaching, which is leading to better progress for pupils. They are therefore demonstrating the capacity to make further improvements. However, they have not had time to close the gaps for pupils who have underachieved in the past.
- The new headteacher's clear vision for the school is shared by the governors, senior leaders and other staff. They are passionate about improving opportunities for their pupils.
- Leaders have used rigorous self-evaluation and, as a result, have introduced effective systems to check on pupils' progress and to identify the right priorities.
- Early successes in addressing poor behaviour and improving teaching are due to effective senior leadership. Currently, subject leaders and year leaders play only a limited role in raising standards within their areas of responsibility and are not fully involved in using data about pupils' achievement, checking the quality of teaching, and bringing about improvement.
- The school has a comprehensive system for managing the performance of staff and any underperformance is robustly addressed. Pay generally reflects performance.

- Senior leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching is accurate.
- Finances are well managed, and money is spent appropriately.
- The local authority has supported the school well in its drive to improve the teaching of English and mathematics. It has also supported the headteacher as she has tackled difficult matters during her first year as head of this school.
- There are plans in place to use the primary sports funding to increase sustainable participation in sport and to introduce initiatives for developing healthy lifestyles. This money has only recently been received, so there is not yet evidence of impact.
- The curriculum is good, with a wide range of subjects and activities to engage pupils. For example, Year 4 pupils could speak knowledgably and enthusiastically about the rainforest, and Year 6 about the Second World War. Inspectors saw some thoughtful diary writing on being an immigrant arriving in England, and how this might feel. The school's art week resulted in some skilful art work being displayed around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with social and moral teaching being particularly strong. Pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong, and they spoke with understanding about some of their fellow pupils having difficult lives outside school.
- Whitley Park is an inclusive school, and racism or any other type of discrimination is swiftly dealt with; equality of opportunity is promoted. Pupils say that all groups are treated fairly, and that different cultures are respected.
- Support given to vulnerable pupils is exemplary, with families being allocated to a member of the senior leadership team who takes responsibility for being the first point of contact for families and outside agencies.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school: the administration is thorough and child protection is well managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have a good understanding about the quality of teaching in the school, and can speak knowledgably about recent improvements. They are involved in the performance management process and work closely with the headteacher to ensure that pay reflects performance. The governing body receives regular reports about the school's performance data and is aware of areas that are improving or need to be addressed further. For example, the governing body is aware that pupils who are supported through the pupil premium are typically not achieving as well as their peers in school; they are now monitoring the school's performance in this regard with greater rigour. The governing body is very supportive of the school, but will also challenge the senior leadership team when appropriate. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136512
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	426534
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	612
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ruth Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Salter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6–7 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 937 5566
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